A TAX ON CELEBRITY?
P.J. O'ROURKE

the weekly
Standard

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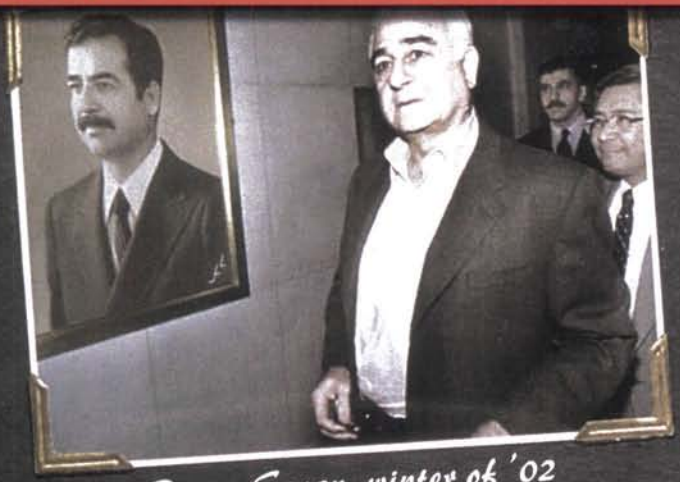


Benon Sevan, winter of '02

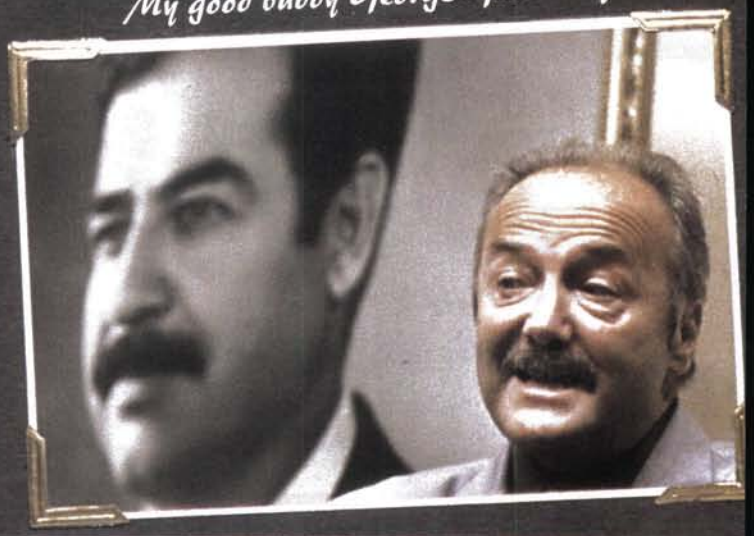
Kofi Annan and me at the palace

Saddam & His Pals

How the Oil-for-Food scandal happened and why it matters

STEPHEN F. HAYES • CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

My good buddy George Galloway



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Dissing the Koran

While Islamist fanatics and ignorant Westerners sow panic over the alleged desecration of a Koran at Guantanamo Bay, no one mentions a startling fact: When it comes to destruction of the Koran, there's no question who the world champion is—the government of Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi state religion is the primitive and austere Wahhabi version of Islam, which defines many traditional Islamic practices as idolatrous. Notably, the state bans the importation of Korans published elsewhere. When foreign pilgrims arrive at the Saudi border by the millions for the annual journey to Mecca, what happens to the non-Saudi Korans they are carrying? The border guards confiscate them, to be shredded, pulped, or burned. Beautiful bindings and fine paper are viewed as a particular provocation—all are destroyed. (This on top of the spiritual vandalism the Saudis perpetrate, by inserting anti-Jewish and anti-Christian squibs into the Korans they publish in foreign languages, as Stephen Schwartz documented in our issue of September 27, 2004.)

This behavior isn't a recent innovation, by the way. Here's an account of how the Saudis carried on when they seized the city of Taif in 1802. It's taken from an unimpeachable Islamic source, the compilation *Advice for the Muslim*, edited by the Turkish scholar Hilmi Isik and published by Hakikat Kitabevi in Istanbul:

> The Wahhabis tore up the copies of the Koran . . . and other Islamic books they took from libraries, mosques and houses, and threw them down on the ground. They made sandals from the gold-gilded leather covers of the Koran and other books and wore them on their filthy feet. There were verses of the Koran and other sacred writings on those leather covers. The pages of those valuable books thrown around were so numerous that there was no space to step in the streets of Taif. . . . The Wahhabi bandits, who were gathered from the deserts for looting and who did not know the Koran, tore up all the copies they found and stamped on them. Only three copies of the Koran were saved from the plunder of a major town, Taif.

No wonder anti-Wahhabi Muslims say "the Saudis print the Koran to destroy it." They print it and they destroy it in a daily desecration that makes *Newsweek*'s retracted Guantanamo allegation look trivial by comparison. ♦

Claims of Cohen

Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen has once again chastised Vice President Dick Cheney for claiming that Saddam had "reconstituted" Iraq's nuclear weapons program. The occasion was a column on "*Newsweek*'s Mistakes." The first mistake was its Koran-flushed-down-the-toilet-at-Guantanamo item that sparked deadly riots in Afghanistan. The second came when "the magazine failed to issue a full-throated retraction and grovel in the manner expected from any institution that gets something wrong, especially the media." Remember that admonition.

Cohen's point, so far as THE SCRAPBOOK can determine, is that while everyone makes mistakes, the U.S. military and the Bush White House make mistakes and lie, too: "Suffice it to say that for the White House and the Pentagon to come down on *Newsweek* for making a mistake is the height of hypocrisy." If the White House is going to demand retractions from *Newsweek*, Cohen wants one from the White House. "Where, just for starters, is the retraction from Dick Cheney, who said that Iraq had 'reconstituted' its nuclear weapons program?"

Here's where. The vice president retracted that March 16, 2003, statement on September 14, 2003, in an appearance on *Meet the Press*, the same show on which he screwed up a few months before. Tim Russert replayed video from the earlier appearance and sought a clarification. "Reconstituted nuclear weapons," Russert repeated. "You misspoke." Cheney: "Yeah. I did misspeak."

Including his latest, Cohen has now written six columns whining about the "reconstituted" quote *since* September 2003, never once mentioning Cheney's retraction. THE SCRAPBOOK eagerly awaits Cohen's "full-throated retraction" in the manner expected from the institution that he is. ♦

Bush's Jobs Record

Remember the favorite talking point of Democratic presidential candidates? How President Bush was worse than Herbert Hoover in the number of jobs created on his watch? After John Kerry made this point in the second presidential debate last fall, CNN "Fact Check" asserted: "Kerry is correct. . . . Bush is on track to become the first president in 72 years (since Herbert Hoover) to oversee a net loss in jobs." Kerry went on to make the same point in the third debate, and Bush let it slide. Maybe the president was tired of making excuses, though it was certainly fair to cite the recession, 9/11, the corporate scandals, and the bursting of the stock bubble as causes of the poor jobs performance. Maybe he was just embarrassed.

He needn't have been. As it turns out, there wasn't a jobless recovery after all. The first Bush term finished with a gain of 119,000 jobs. This is easily deter-

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mined by comparing the number of jobs in January 2001 (132,454,000) with the number in January 2005 (132,573,000). Few in the press have done the math, Bloomberg being one of the exceptions. Democrats, of course, couldn't be expected to disclose they'd been wrong. And since 119,000 new jobs is not impressive, the White House hasn't touted it.

Kerry and other Democrats also claimed that 3 million jobs had been lost during the Bush administration. If so, they were partially offset every year by new jobs, a fact the Democrats didn't mention. The big year for the Bush jobs recovery was 2004, when job growth was a robust 2,201,000. In truth, it was clear by the time of the presidential debates that Bush stood a good chance of averting a net loss during his four-year term. That didn't stop Kerry from making the job loss charge, nor did it encourage Bush to predict he'd wind up with a positive number.

With the race over, the mainstream press didn't seek to find out if the Hoover comparisons were true or not. It may have been bias. It may have been indifference. Now at least we know what really occurred: a small, but real, gain. ♦

Lloyd Cutler, R.I.P.

Lloyd Cutler, the Washington lawyer-insider and onetime White House counsel to Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, died earlier this month at the age of 87. Mr. Cutler was the archetypal "wise man," as opposed to wise guy, moving in and out of government service with ease. He wore his partisanship lightly and considered any summons from the White House a public duty. A Democrat, he served presidents of both parties, and was rightly hailed by George W. Bush as a "devoted public servant," one who "served our nation with dedication and distinction."

Mr. Cutler was not just influential, however; he was prescient. In the late summer of 1987, when Judge Robert Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court set loose an unprecedented firestorm of public invective and personal abuse, Cutler went before the Senate Judiciary Committee to endorse Bork and warn left-wing activists and fellow Democrats about the wind they were sowing. Addressing complaints that Bork might have opposed some of the rulings of the Warren Court, Cutler warned, "I would submit that those who prefer the status quo . . . ought not to convert this preference into a rigid orthodoxy that bars the confirmation of any nominee who has at some times been critical of one or more prevailing majority views."

And then, in words that resonate 18 years later, he added: "The time is going to come—and it can't come too soon for me—when there is going to be a Democratic president. . . . It's necessary for Democrats who would vote against a moderate conservative nominee to the Court to recall or remember that they are giving a hostage to the time when a Democratic president will be appointing a moderate liberal, or perhaps a very liberal member of the Court, who will be judged by the same standard in reverse that you would be applying, in my view, if you rejected Judge Bork today."

We know what happened, and can't help but wonder what the state of judicial nominations might be in Congress these days if Democrats had taken the advice of one of their finest lawyers. ♦

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Casual

Home from the Hill

On a recent Saturday, I attended a brief memorial service for Fred Stone, the late, longtime master of the Wolver Beagles, a private pack in Middleburg, Virginia, that has hunted the rolling Loudoun County farmland since 1913. Fred, who died at 72 this past March, had been master for some three decades.

Gathered in a grove at the corner of his property in Middleburg, there were about 50 people in attendance, as well as two old girls from the pack, Hurry and Sapphire, both now retired from hunting, and standing patiently by on their leashes. Members of Fred's family offered stories, and one of the new joint masters read a letter to Fred—purportedly from Hurry and Sapphire, and from Spiteful, who preferred to stay in the kennel—about their years of hunting the surrounding countryside.

This was, of course, a decidedly whimsical gesture; but it lightened an otherwise somber mood and, I have to admit, was both funny and touching. At one point the master pretended she couldn't decipher a phrase, and lowered the page to hound-eye level for translation. The two matronly beagles moved forward in unison, and seemed to be peering closely at their handiwork.

I should like to have written such a letter to Fred Stone myself—a thought that, no doubt, has occurred to more than one person attending a funeral. I have been a beagler for many years, and it was Fred who kindly invited me into his pack and patiently taught me the rudiments of an ancient, and uncommon, pastime. I am not ashamed to say that one of the prouder days of my life was when Fred anointed me a whipper-in of the pack, entitling me to wear the beagler's dark green woollen hunting jacket with the characteristic "buff collar [with] light-blue piping" of the Wolver.

Hunting rabbits with hounds is an ancient sport, and originated in England. But the stylized beagling I know—with hunt gear, wood-and-leather whips, horns, and strict choreography—is, perhaps, a few centuries old, and was exported to the United States in Victorian times. There are now about 32 recognized packs in America, mostly concentrated in the Middle Atlantic states and upper South.

Once a year, in early November, the National Beagle Club holds trials at its headquarters, Institute Farm in Aldie, Virginia, where the packs converge and compete on the basis of form and success in flushing out game. The beaglers sleep in tiny cabins, owned by the packs, circling the manor house and, at the end of the trials, there is a riotous dinner where the cups and ribbons are awarded.

There are two distinguishing facts about beagling. The first is that the members of the hunt follow the hounds on foot, not on horseback; and the second is that the object of the enterprise is not the kill—which, in any event, is rare—but the hunt.

Admittedly, chasing rabbits across hill and dale while encased in fox-hunters' garb gives beagling, at first blush, a certain Monty Python quality. But horses are impractical in these circumstances. A beagle's range is much narrower than a foxhound's, and rabbits are prone to course through woodland, or dive under hedgerows, or hop along stone fences. The hunter is obliged to plunge into thick brush, splash across streams, roll over barbed wire, and, strictly speaking, run where no sensible horse would go.

The other point is more subjective. Like a Thurber cartoon, beagling is something you either get or you don't. The pack, usually a dozen hounds or so, sets out with the master and four whippers-in while a gallery of spectators ("the field") follows at a respectful distance. The master blows a small copper horn to move the beagles along, while the whips, jogging at the four corners of the pack, strive to keep the hounds together in a roughly rectangular position.

If a whip spies a rabbit ("a view"), he cries "Tally-ho!"—I'm not kidding—and points the way for the master while steering the beagles in the general direction of the hare. When the hounds catch the scent, they are off in pursuit—across the field, over the hill, through the stand of trees—ears flapping, tails wagging, and singing in the unmistakable baying voice of the hound that is music to a countryman's ears.

I confess that I am scarcely the most capable of whips, and there are moments, especially when bounding up those lovely, but steep, Virginia hillsides, when I wonder if I will live to see the end of the hunt. But in those moments is there anything more blissfully remote from political Washington, or more soothing to a middle-aged suburbanite?

For those reasons, I was thankful to Fred Stone, and glad to count myself among his friends when his ashes were strewn to the wind. The local Episcopal priest recited a prayer, somebody blew on the horn, and Hurry and Sapphire cocked their heads as if ready to run.

Philip Terzian

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Estate Planning

Irwin M. Stelzer's latest pro-inheritance tax piece ("Death and Taxes," May 9) mercifully did not call for a 100 percent rate. So, we are making progress. But there are a number of problems with Stelzer's argument.

First: The inheritance tax *is* a death duty and not a tax on the beneficiaries. It is the size of the estate—not the size of the bequest and not the income of the beneficiary that is taxed—that determines the tax rate. The $50,000 bequeathed to the butler and the $50 million bequeathed to the ne'er-do-well son are not taxed any differently. The $105 million estate needed to *make* those bequests is taxed. Nor is the timing of the tax determined by the beneficiaries' actions. It hinges solely on the death of the decedent.

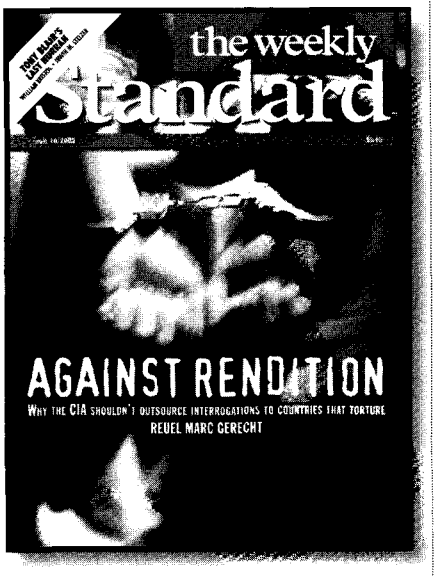
Second: The death tax is not an income tax, it is a wealth tax. It is not related to the income of the decedent or of the beneficiaries. If it were, it would be utterly preposterous. Given a 6 percent return on capital, the equivalent "income tax" rate equivalent to a 50 percent death tax is about 800 percent.

Third: As Stelzer notes, many estates haven't been previously taxed. But Stelzer then uses this fact to falsely conclude that inheritance taxes do not represent "double taxation." Using Stelzer's logic, the same could be said of corporate income and dividend taxes, since a good portion of dividends are not received by taxable entities.

The fact is, much of an estate's wealth *is* subject to double taxation (or triple taxation, if you view capital income taxes as doubly taxing earnings). In the Slemrod-Gale analysis, cited by Stelzer, much of the supposedly untaxed wealth in estates is untaxed because it represents inflation-related gains in asset values.

Fourth: If Stelzer believes in "equality of opportunity" as much as he claims, then surely he would join with the left wing of the British Labour party in seeking to abolish nonstate schools. They do not qualify under Stelzer's genetic-bequests exemption (which itself seems a bit odd). Similarly, private medicine should be abolished in Britain, since the National Health Service provides "equality of opportunity" for medical care.

Fifth: The inheritance tax is a tax on entrepreneurship. As such, it severely impacts the cash flow of small businesses. Most small businesses and entrepreneurs find that they must buy insurance to cover estate-planning issues. The worst aspect of the estate tax for small businesses is its random nature. A business is deprived of management and capital at the same time—and the timing is wholly unpredictable.



Sixth: Every study of the topic that I am aware of shows that the current 55 percent inheritance tax rate is *way* over the revenue-maximizing rate. A 55 percent wealth confiscation rate really concentrates the mind on finding lawyers and others who offer to minimize the bite. In that regard, we probably are helping to *create* human capital with the death tax. Too bad it is a form of capital with low—or even negative—social returns.

Lawrence B. Lindsey
Washington, DC

Rally Round the Flag

Regarding Edwin M. Yoder Jr.'s "Run It Down the Flagpole" (May 2): When I was a student there in the late 1940s, the University of Virginia used the Confederate battle flag as its school flag whenever we played northern colleges. For many years afterward I flew the Confederate battle flag alongside the American flag on Memorial Day, in honor of my great-grandfather, who was wounded slightly at Gettysburg and severely at Chickamauga.

Because the battle flag has been misused and mischaracterized, I now fly the Stars and Bars—sometimes called the Daughters (of the Confederacy's) flag—to avoid any misunderstanding. But my affection for the battle flag, and for the men who fought under it, glows warm and undiminished.

E. Earle Ellis
Fort Worth, TX

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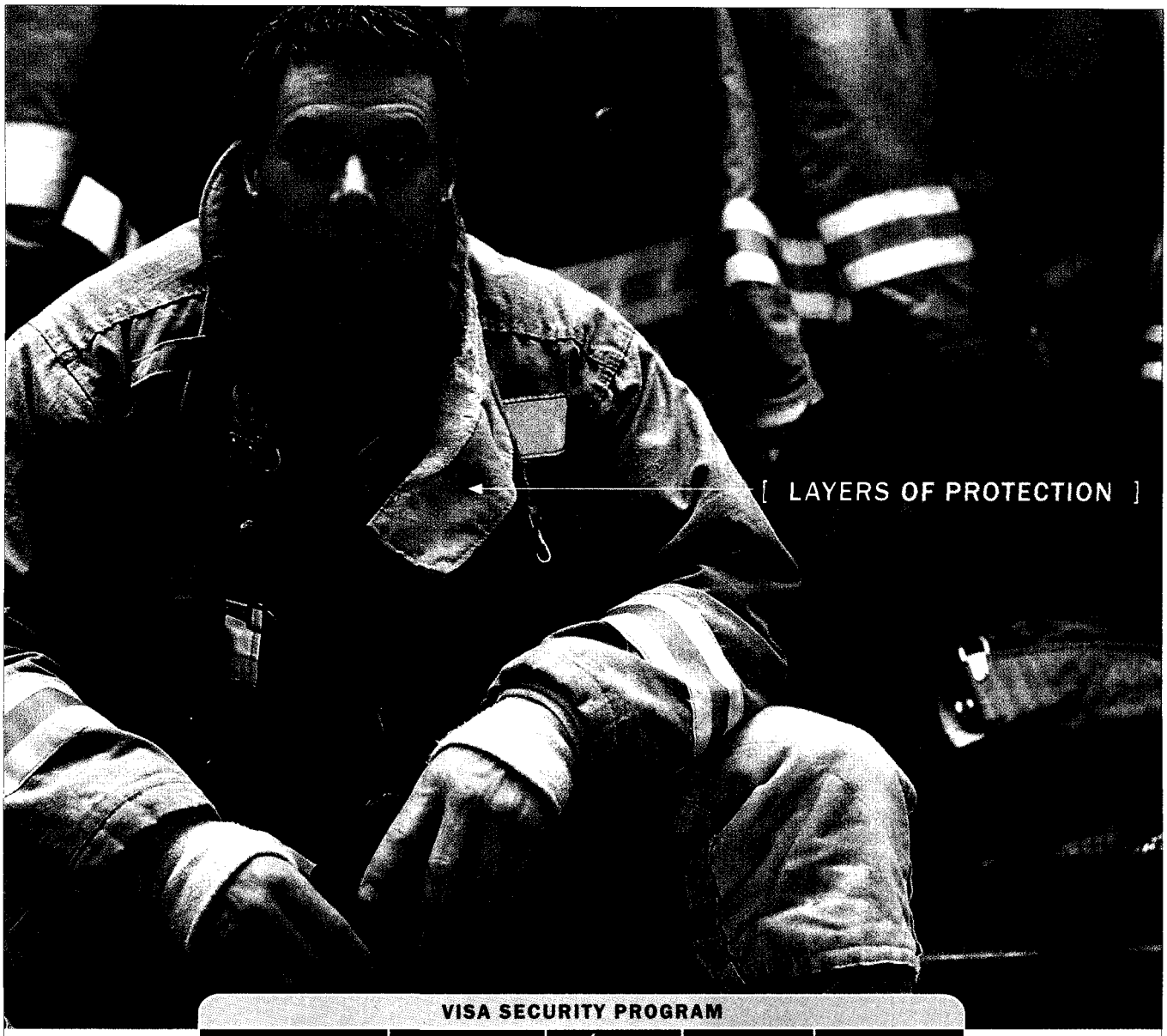

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the weekly Standard

Our Uzbek Problem

In the weeks after September 11, 2001, as Washington prepared for a difficult war to remove the Taliban from Afghanistan, the neighboring former Soviet republic of Uzbekistan became a particularly useful ally. Indeed, Uzbekistan was the first country to offer military assistance to our government on the afternoon of September 11, and the Pentagon subsequently established a base there. After the main fighting in Afghanistan ended, we continued to work with the regime of Islam Karimov, even though he remained an unsubtle dictator of the neo-Soviet style. We did little to help promote political freedom there. Indeed, we seem to have "rendered" dozens of terrorists to the Karimov government for interrogation, despite (or perhaps because of) its well-deserved reputation for brutality and torture.

But the character of the Karimov regime can no longer be ignored in deference to the strategic usefulness of Uzbekistan. The Taliban has been defeated, and, with the liberation of Iraq, the nature of the global struggle to which the Bush administration is committed is no longer exclusively focused on the destruction of terrorist redoubts. We are now committed to a democratizing effort that challenges tyranny along with terror as threats to peace and freedom around the world. The Uzbek regime that was part of the solution in 2001 is now, with its bloody suppression of protests, part of the problem.

An ongoing hazard of the fight against terrorists has been that tyrants would exploit the threat of terror to win indulgence or even support from the United States. From the Saudi royals, to Vladimir Putin, to Putin's Uzbek friend Karimov, strongmen hope to gain acceptance by Washington of their violent habits of governance. Of course, it is true that the United States does (mostly) have to deal with the governments it finds in place in the world. But we don't need to wink at their bad acts. To the contrary, a more or less coherent strategy for the spread of freedom will often require pressuring and criticizing these governments. And, incidentally, it is political, civil, and economic freedom to which most Central Asian Muslims aspire. Just like Ukrainians, Georgians, and Iraqis.

So, toleration of Karimov's brutality threatens to undercut this administration's impressive and successful foreign policy. Unfortunately, previous administrations allowed dictators to learn the lesson that repression works. Has Burma's high command paid much of a price for its brutality in Rangoon in 1988, or Beijing for its massacre in 1989? Karimov wants to follow their path, rather than go the route of the ex-rulers of Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. But it is hardly in our interest to let brutality become a winning strategy, or to let massacres pass without consequences for a regime's relations with the United States. As the *Financial Times* warned in a fine editorial last Friday, "If Mr. Karimov survives the crisis with his authoritarian regime intact, undemocratic leaders everywhere will see that brutality pays."

Less than two weeks ago, Karimov ordered his troops to the eastern Uzbek city of Andijon, where economic discontent had stirred the local populace to protest. They opened fire in a spasm of official bloodshed reminiscent of Tiananmen Square. The death toll remains unconfirmed, perhaps unconfirmable, but apparently exceeds 500 and includes women and children. Karimov and his servants have sought to explain away this atrocity with charges that the Andijon demonstrators were, or were inspired by, Islamist radicals. But such claims seem to be mendacious propaganda, which, left unchallenged, could undermine the real and indispensable effort against radical Islam.

The Bush administration's response to the bloodshed has been tepid, featuring calls for restraint by both sides. The president's failure even to mention Uzbekistan in a major foreign policy speech to the International Republican Institute last week is not good news. Neither is the absence of talk about using U.S. aid as leverage on Karimov.

Uzbekistan has a distinguished cultural and theological Islamic heritage. If it had a regime accountable to the people, allowing entrepreneurship and pluralism, it could become a force for progress in other Muslim lands. As an exemplar of successful reform, Uzbekistan would be a far more valuable ally than it is now as Karimov's fiefdom.

President Bush should lead the international pressure on Karimov to allow journalists, legitimate relief workers, and trustworthy investigators to travel to Andijon and render a verdict on the events there. That verdict will likely be harsh for Karimov, and it should have consequences for U.S. aid to and support for the regime. Washington cannot turn a blind eye to massacres in a country where U.S. troops are based and that receives U.S. assistance. Here as elsewhere the principle of linkage between a regime's behavior and relations with the United States must be reestablished. And if not in Uzbekistan, where we have so much leverage, how seriously will others take our promises and our warnings?

— *Stephen Schwartz and William Kristol*

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Après 'Non,' le Déluge?

The European constitution goes before the voters.

BY GERARD BAKER

NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV once commented wryly that the only trouble with free elections is that you never know who's going to win. The old shoe-banger's words have been echoing around Europe these last few weeks, as the continent prepares for a democratic exercise that could alter the entire political construct and direction of Europe. Nobody has a clue what is going to happen. And European leaders are as terrified of voters as the ever-smiling Khrushchev was.

The occasion is not strictly an election, but a referendum, or a whole series of them, beginning Sunday, May 29, in France, on whether or not to approve the E.U.'s first-ever constitution, created last year by an intergovernmental treaty signed by the union's heads of government. The constitution, a prolix, rambling document at least ten times the length of the U.S. Constitution (with amendments) and infinitely less inspiring, is an attempt to set out in detail the relations between European governments and the people they govern.

In some respects, the constitution simply consolidates multifarious existing treaties and arrangements into a single document. For example, it formally establishes a single European foreign minister and diplomatic service to implement a single foreign policy, a goal first laid out in European negotiations a decade ago. But in other areas, the constitution creates important new rules. It gives small but critical powers to the European parliament, the self-proclaimed representative body that is better described as a collection of pampered nobodies on large expense accounts elected by ridiculously low percentages of their national electorates. The constitution also confers rights on "European citizens," most notably through the introduction of a Charter of Fundamental Rights, which covers, among others, the "right to work."

The principal effect of the constitution, however, is to confirm and accelerate the central tendency of the E.U. over the last 50 years to send power to the center, to the European level, while eroding national sovereignty in everything from economic policy to foreign and defense policy. The constitution is, the German minister for European affairs said earlier this year, "the birth certificate of the United States of Europe."

Though a rather bold step, the constitution was not expected to run into trouble when the process of ratification by 25 member states began. For years, European political elites have happily worked at creating a European superstate without worrying much about what European publics wanted. They knew that under some national constitutions—Denmark's, Ireland's, etc.—the treaty would be put to a vote, and they knew that these countries might get difficult and throw the treaty out, as had happened in the past. But it was generally assumed such minor setbacks from such insignificant states could happily be ignored, as had also happened in the past.

In April of last year, Prime Minister Tony Blair announced a referendum on the subject would be held. In Britain, the E.U. is currently about as popular as Belgian pop music. Increasing numbers view the constitution as the most serious blow yet to British national identity and sovereignty. Blair's decision has had dramatic consequences in the rest of Europe. A number of governments that had been hoping to slide the constitution past their own publics decided they too had better hold a formal consultation.

Most fatefully, French president Jacques Chirac decided that, for the first time since it voted on a single European currency 13 years ago, France, too, needed a referendum. So it is that France now finds itself in the unusual and exquisitely ironic position of threatening the entire European project of which it has been the most energetic backer. Opinion polls suggest the nation is evenly split ahead of the May 29 vote, with momentum shifting almost daily between the Yes and the No camps. Whatever the French decide, two days later, on June 1, the Dutch will vote. Opinion polls there suggest a slight advantage for the No camp. Then, later this year, tricky votes are expected in the Czech Republic and Poland; after those comes Denmark, and, sometime next spring, in what may be the biggest test of all, British voters will have their say.

After reluctantly agreeing to consult the people, the European Union's leaders now have absolutely no idea what to do if the people vote No. In the last few days, European leaders have looked like Keystone Kops as they've tried to give a coherent answer to the question, What next?

The French government has said there can be no renegotiation. If the constitution is rejected, it will be dead. It also mutters darkly that rejection would be a potentially terminal blow to the dreams of a united Europe. The German government, whose leading figures have been spending more time campaigning in France recently than running their own country (Germany does not have a provision for a referendum) says the matter is undecided and that the constitution can be revamped if necessary and put to

Gerard Baker, U.S. editor of the Times *of London, is a contributing editor to* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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AFP / Joel Saget

Anti-constitution rally in Paris, May 9

another vote. In Britain, Jack Straw, the foreign secretary, has said that if the French vote No, then the whole process is over and there will be no need for a British referendum next year (conveniently letting Tony Blair off the hook of a looming personal disaster in the U.K. vote). But Blair's Europe minister has said that whatever happens in France, the British will still vote.

Part of the confusion about what on earth happens if the treaty is rejected is due to the fact that nobody can agree on what this constitution actually does. In France, the opposition is led by socialists and trade unionists who argue the new system will usher in a capitalist nightmare of longer working hours, low taxation, and free trade. To confuse matters, they are supported by conservative traditionalists who are urging a No vote as an attempt to keep Turkey out of the E.U. (The Turks have been promised negotiations about possible entry, but many Europeans, especially the French, are adamantly opposed.) In the Netherlands, the debate is more about resentment at the overweening powers of the large European states, especially France and Germany, and about the challenge of adjusting a multicultural Dutch society to the new demographically challenged Europe. In Britain, the opposition is well entrenched but diametrically the opposite of its counterparts in France, arguing that the constitution will produce a socialist nightmare that will saddle business with all kinds of regulations.

In this Babel of competing arguments and interpretations, what should a bewildered outsider make of the coming referenda? Americans have long looked on somewhat nonplussed at European squabbles. Is this just another incomprehensible comedy of manners that will not have much effect on the continuing narrative of an expanding and integrating European continent?

The key here is to remain focused on what the constitution would actually do. The constitution, in short, represents another big step toward a single European state. That state would not be, in spite of the fears whipped up by French socialists, some hideous model of Anglo-Saxon economic liberalism, but one firmly entrenched in the traditional European social-market model, one that would offer broad protections to workers and give pan-European regulators all kinds of new scope to practice their authority. It was designed, at least in part, to turn back the push, from new members in the East and from Britain, for freer markets and a more competitive business environment. In the political sphere, the constitution would generate a new impetus towards a single, unified European view in world affairs that would give considerable support to the Franco-German ambition to rebalance global power away from the United States—and it would limit the ability of individual European nations to support the United States.

In short, if you think that what Europe needs is more regulation, more social protection, and less competition; if you think it needs to build up and strengthen the supranational state with political institutions accountable to almost no one; and if you think the world needs a united Europe led by a narrow group of politicians intent on challenging U.S. power, then you are definitely hoping the constitution beats the odds and clears all the popular hurdles that await it in the next year. If, on the other hand, you doubt the merits of that sort of Europe, you may be offering a silent prayer, perhaps for the first time in your life, that you are in solidarity with a majority of French opinion at least for one day this coming weekend. ♦

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Here's a Tax We Can All Agree On

Soak the celebrities.

BY P. J. O'ROURKE

THE GREATEST PLEASURE of running a country (although no politician will admit it) is getting to tax people. We Republicans decry exactions and imposts and espouse minimal outlay by the sovereign power. But we control all three branches of government. This won't last forever. Let's have some fun while we can. Moreover, the federal deficit is—contrary to all Republican principles—huge. Even the most spending-averse among us wouldn't mind additional revenue.

America's media and entertainment industry has a gross (as it were) revenue of $316.8 billion a year. If we subtract the income derived from worthy journalism and the publishing of serious books, that leaves $316.8 billion. Surely this money can be put to a more socially useful purpose than reportage on the going forth and multiplying of Britney Spears.

What is the least damaging way to tax the media and entertainment industry? The first response that comes to mind is "Who cares?" Everybody in this business hates us except Rupert Murdoch, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page editors, and Bruce Willis. Private bills in Congress having to do with Bermuda incorporation can take care of that. Still, we don't want to tax profits. After all we're Republicans. And as that great Republican think tank, the Bible, puts it, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose" . . . the next election.

P.J. O'Rourke is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD *and author, most recently, of* Peace Kills *(Atlantic Monthly Press).*

An indirect tax is best, being proportional in its effects and producing "flat tax" outcomes. I propose a tax on raw materials.

The raw material of the media and entertainment industry is fame. Of course we wouldn't want to tax the well-earned and justly deserved fame of a Jonas Salk or a Ronald Reagan. However, now that Reagan and Salk have gone to their reward and America has recovered from its 9/11 adulation of New York City firemen, there are no such famous people extant in the United States. I did a Lexis/Nexis search.

What have I ever done to deserve being exposed to Paris Hilton's Chihuahua, Tinkerbell, wearing four designer outfits?

Actually the resource upon which the media and entertainment industry depends is not fame but its toxic run-off, celebrity. America has vast proven reserves. I bought the May 23 issue of a magazine devoted to vulgar public notice. Its contents suggest that Sartre was ever so slightly misquoted on the nature of perdition: Hell is *People*. What have I ever done to deserve being exposed to Paris Hilton's Chihuahua, Tinkerbell, wearing four designer outfits? This was in a photo spread titled "Dogs Are Children Too!" Also featured was Tori Spelling's pug dressed as Little Orphan Annie and a quote from Oprah Winfrey about her cocker spaniel, Sophie: "I have a daughter." (Named, no doubt, with an eye to using the William Styron novel in a forthcoming Oprah's Book Club segment.)

I suggest, therefore, a Celebrity Tax with a low-end base rate of, mmm, 100 percent. Furthermore, let's make the tax progressive to get some Democrats on board. (Probably not including Hillary, Ted, and Barney Frank. They'll be working nights and weekends to pay up.) Given the modest talent of current celebrities and the immodest example they set for impressionable youth, we'll call it a "Value Subtracted Tax," or, better, a "Family Value Subtracted Tax." And it will be calculated on the celebrity's net worth.

We can quit worrying about the federal deficit, at least for this year. *Forbes* estimates that Oprah alone has assets of $1 billion. True, we need another $411 billion to close the budget gap. But optimism is kindled by a flip through *People*. I had no idea there were so many notoriety nuisances. Among the boldface names in the "Insider" gossip column I find Kimberly Stewart, Scarlett Johansson, and Michelle Trachtenberg—all, I'm given to understand, possessed of anonymity manqué. And who on earth is Wilmer Valderrama? Why am I being informed that she (or, as far as I know, he) was dancing with someone called Ryan Seacrest at the Spider Club in West Hollywood? The Spider Club is not, I am guessing, exactly Chasen's or the Brown Derby.

There will be difficulties levying the Celebrity Tax. *People* and its print and broadcast ilk treat certain better types of human beings as at least nominal celebrities. For example, in my May 23 issue there is an article about a young man who is blind and severely crippled but an accomplished pianist. Another article concerns a 78-year-old nun doing good works in a Tijuana jail (although, rather tabloidishly for a nun, she has been divorced twice and has seven children). We can't tax handicapped

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piano players and elderly, contrite sisters of mercy. An expanded IRS will be needed to determine who is rightly acclaimed and who is merely egregiously overexposed.

Republicans aren't supposed to grow the bureaucracy. But, being honest with ourselves as Republicans, creating more patronage jobs isn't always a bad thing. The GOP includes large numbers of earnest, morally committed social conservatives, not to say cranks. We need their fundraising and get-out-the-vote skills. Here is a perfect place for them between elections, with civil service benefits and plenty to keep them busy.

A second problem with an excise on infamy is the possible economic effect. The media and entertainment industry is an important factor in America's GDP. Our best economists tell us that increasing the taxes on any enterprise decreases the enterprise's productivity. But in this case—and this case only—I'll argue against Milton Friedman. Everything (by "everything" I mean Reality TV) indicates that the business of being a celebrity does not respond to the usual positive and negative economic stimuli.

People (and by "people" I mean contestants on *American Idol*) are willing to invest all that they have in the faint hope they'll receive a fleeting and worthless moment as the center of attention for an audience of bored idiots. (If you doubt me, compel yourself to watch an episode, regrettably available on DVD and video, of *Jackass*.) Tax the media and entertainment industry at a million percent and it will continue to produce a surplus of celebrities with Stakhanovite labor heroism.

Of course it's possible that I'm wrong. My proposed Celebrity Tax might create wide-ranging economic dislocations. The media and entertainment industry could be bankrupted. This would result in the demise of Top 40 radio, blockbuster movies, hit television shows, and *People*. If I am wrong, send the bottles of Veuve Clicquot in care of this magazine. ♦

The English Patient

Leslie Burke wants to live; the National Health Service has a second opinion. BY WESLEY J. SMITH

London

THE MOST IMPORTANT bioethics litigation in the world today involves a 45-year-old Englishman, Leslie Burke. He isn't asking for very much. Burke has a progressive neurological disease that may one day deprive him of the ability to swallow. If that happens, Burke wants to receive food and water through a tube. Knowing that Britain's National Health Service (NHS) rations care, Burke sued to ensure that he will not be forced to endure death by dehydration against his wishes.

Burke's lawsuit is even more important to the future of medical ethics than was the Terri Schiavo case. Schiavo was dehydrated to death—a bitter and profound injustice—because Judge George W. Greer ruled both that Terri was in a persistent vegetative state and (based on statements she allegedly made during casual conversations some 20 years ago) that she would not want to live under such circumstances. In other words, Terri Schiavo lost her life in order to safeguard her personal autonomy, though she never made the actual decision to die.

But Burke, who is fully competent, worries that his wishes will be ignored precisely *because* he wants food and water even if he becomes totally paralyzed. Receiving food and water when it is wanted certainly seems the least each of us should be able to expect.

Wesley J. Smith, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute and an attorney and consultant for the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, is the author, most recently, of Consumer's Guide to a Brave New World.

But, it turns out, whether Burke lives or dies by dehydration may not be up to him. According to National Health Service treatment guidelines, doctors, rather than patients or their families, have the final say about providing or withholding care.

Burke won his case at the trial court level when a judge ruled that denying the tube-supplied food and water a patient wants "would be a breach of claimant's rights under . . . the European Convention on Human Rights." This should be uncontroversial. But the General Medical Council, the medical licensing authority, appealed, joined by the British government.

Why do Britain's medical establishment and government insist that Burke be denied a right to decide whether he receives tube-supplied food and water? It all boils down to two concepts that are increasingly intertwined in modern bioethics theory and practice. First is the so-called quality-of-life ethic that presumes to judge the worth of patients' lives according to their mental and physical capacities. Under this view, doctors or bioethicists may judge a life to be of such low quality that it is not worth extending, irrespective of the patient's wishes. The second issue is money—an especially potent factor for England's increasingly strained socialized medical system.

Accordingly, the secretary of state for health argued before the Court of Appeal that while patients have the right to refuse life-sustaining treatment, they don't have a corresponding right to receive it. Even though the Burke case does not involve high tech medical procedures—he is not asking for a respirator or kidney dialysis, after

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all—the government claims that the trial court's ruling undermines the authority of doctors to make the "clinical judgment" about whether a patient's "treatment would be of benefit," based at least in part on the question of "the resources which are available." The right of doctors to exercise such control is "absolutely fundamental to the day-to-day functioning of the NHS."

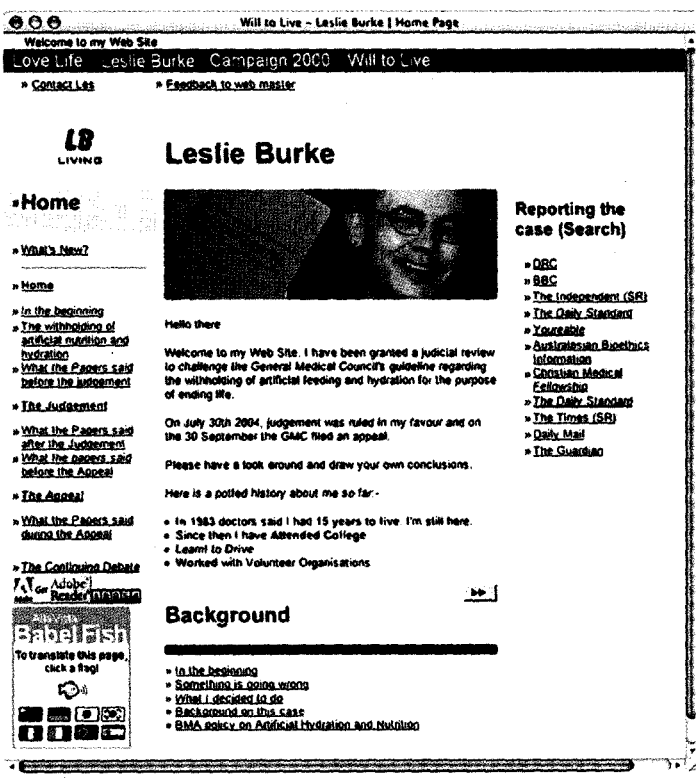
In support of the government's position, the secretary of state filed a statement by Elizabeth Woodeson, the head of scientific development and bioethics at the Department of Health. Her testimony demonstrates the threat that contemporary bioethics poses to the lives of vulnerable patients. As Woodeson explained, the National Health Service established the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (given the creepily inappropriate acronym NICE) to issue "clinical guidelines" that blend efficacy of outcomes, quality of life judgments, and economics:

> An assessment is made of the cost of the treatment per additional year of life which it brings, and per quality adjusted life year (QALY) . . . which takes into consideration the quality of life of the patient during any additional time for which their life will be prolonged. The clinical and cost effectiveness of the treatment under review is then used as the basis for a recommendation as to whether or not . . . the treatment should be provided in the NHS. . . . The Secretary of State believes that . . . clinicians should be able to follow NICE guidelines without being obliged to accede to patient demands. . . . If that principle were undermined, there would be considerable risk of inefficient use of NHS resources.

In other words, medical care is effectively rationed by the National Health Service under guidelines set by bioethicists based on their beliefs about the low quality of life of patients whom they have never met. While the views of patients and families are to be taken into account when deciding whether to provide treatment, they are not determinative.

This top-down approach is what Leslie Burke is rebelling against. He knows that many bioethicists have a low opinion of the quality of life of people with profound disabilities. Burke doesn't trust doctors, much less bioethicists, to judge whether his life is worth living. "I feel strongly that my body and my being are mine," Burke insisted when I visited him recently at his Lancaster home. "But my desire [to live] can be overridden" based on prejudice against the disabled. "I am no different than anybody else, but I am not seen that way anymore."

Adding heft to Burke's concerns: When I privately discussed his case with a prominent British physician who I expected would sympathize with Burke's views, I was taken aback when he told me crossly, "Burke is only thinking of himself rather than looking at the bigger picture." How thoughtless of him.



Burke's website at www.willtolive.co.uk

It would be a mistake to assume that Americans are safe from having life-sustaining treatment rationed like this just because we don't have a national health service. Burke is fighting a broader movement in the bioethics field, "Futile Care Theory," that is also gaining traction here. Futile care theory is a one-way street when it comes to patient autonomy and end-of-life care. Futilitarians assert that patients have an absolute right to refuse life-sustaining treatment but are not similarly entitled to insist that their lives be maintained. Indeed, under futile care theory, as under the NHS rationing approach, whether a seriously ill or disabled patient's request to be kept alive is granted depends on whether doctors and bioethicists see the patient's life as worth living and spending medical resources to sustain.

For the last several years American hospitals have been quietly promulgating futile care protocols that empower their ethics committees to authorize doctors to unilaterally refuse wanted care. These futile care policies are beginning to be imposed on unwilling patients and their families.

As is usually the case in such matters, the first victims are on the far margins. Thus, in Houston, Sun Hudson, a 5-month-old infant born with a terminal disability, was taken off a ventilator in March over his mother's objections based on a Texas law that defers to futile care theory. Under the

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law, once a hospital bioethics committee determines that the treatment should not be rendered, the patient or family has a mere 10 days to transfer the patient's care to another hospital. This can prove difficult in this era of managed care and HMOs, since the affected patients are usually the most expensive to treat. After 10 days without a transfer, the outcome is usually death following the unilateral withdrawal of treatment—as occurred in Sun Hudson's case.

In another Houston case, one with ironic echoes of Terri Schiavo, the wife of Spiro Nikolouzos *wants* tube-feeding for her persistently unconscious husband, based on his previously stated desire to live. But unlike Schiavo's, Nikolouzos's personal wishes are not deemed determinative: A hospital ethics committee voted to refuse to continue his tube-supplied food and water and ventilator support. He would have died, but a San Antonio hospital unexpectedly agreed to provide the care. Then its ethics committee also decided to cut off care, but Nikolouzos was transferred to a nursing home. For the moment, Nikolouzos is being allowed to stay alive. But the final decision about the matter isn't his wife's: Under futilitarian Texas law, it belongs to committees of bioethicists and doctors.

In this darkening atmosphere, the Leslie Burke case could not be more important. If Burke loses on appeal, patients in Britain will be stripped of the basic human right to receive food and water through a feeding tube. Such a ruling should send a cold shiver through disabled, elderly, and dying patients everywhere.

Moreover, given the increasing propensity of some Supreme Court justices to look overseas when deciding issues of American law, a Burke loss could plausibly end up reinforcing futile care laws in this country. There will undoubtedly be protracted litigation on this issue in coming years. How Leslie Burke fares may determine whether futile care theory is allowed to metamorphose from ad hoc health care rationing into an explicit—and expanding—duty to die. ♦

The Shrinking of the Greens

An environmental movement that shuns the right is bound to fail. BY WILLIAM F. PEDERSEN

WHY IS environmental protection almost universally seen as a left-wing issue? A lively debate within the "environmental community" makes one reason clear. Many professional environmentalists want it that way. Sound evidence—and the actual needs of environmental protection—come second to that agenda.

This debate began with the release last fall of an essay called "The Death of Environmentalism" by two longtime environmental activists, Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus. Later published with periodic follow-on comments in the online magazine *Grist*, the piece has become must reading among environmental types. It attempts to explain what the authors see as the 30-year decline in the political influence of their cause.

According to Shellenberger and Nordhaus, during the 1960s and 1970s environmentalists and other "progressive" forces won landmark victories, but failed to build a permanent social transformation on these gains. This left them unable to resist effectively when right-wing advocacy groups targeted them in a decades-long and largely successful ideological offensive apparently claiming (though the essay is vague here) that environmental protection causes unemployment. In consequence, it is said, the government for 15 years has ignored the proven imminence of "the greatest calamity in modern history"—namely, global warming—despite the expenditure of "hundreds of millions of dollars" by environmental groups urging action, and has failed to embrace the program of total economic and social transformation that would be needed to address it.

The authors leave the nature of this transformation undefined. Apparently it would rest on a multibillion dollar program of government-directed investment in alternative energy sources. However, they are by no means vague about where support for that transformation should be found. Shellenberger and Nordhaus explain that "most of the intellectuals who staff environmental groups are so repelled by the right's values" that they have "assiduously avoided examining [their] own in a serious way" in response to the conservative challenge.

Such a reexamination, Shellenberger and Nordhaus conclude, would reveal that future success in environmental protection depends on making common cause with such other "progressive" groups as people of color, gays, feminists, peace advocates, and labor unions. Virtually all of the subsequent comments in *Grist* have agreed.

This self-centered and self-important narrative rests almost entirely on historical and scientific fantasies. The keystone environmental laws of the 1960s and 1970s, far from being achievements of the left, arose from a broad social consensus and were supported and signed essentially without exception by Republican presidents. Attributing these laws to professional environmentalists is like giving the surfer credit for the wave. Levels of all regulated pollutants are lower today than in 1970 and are projected to go still lower, while once imperiled predators like wolves and mountain lions are returning to areas from which they

William F. Pedersen practices law in Washington, D.C. He last wrote for THE WEEKLY STANDARD *on global warming.*

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had long been exterminated. Even on global warming, there is a broadening consensus that more can and should be done despite scientific uncertainties.

But Shellenberger and Nordhaus's underlying political analysis is far worse. One might expect a movement taking stock of its political assets to reexamine the strength of its core appeal, and to identify new groups that might be persuaded to support it. Shellenberger and Nordhaus do neither.

On the contrary, they contend that since "everything is connected to everything else," and since all our perceptual categories are somewhat arbitrary, the term "environment" is simply a mental construct. They therefore counsel against any revitalized effort to dramatize the beauty and wonder of the natural world, or to explain why more action is needed to protect such beloved features as mountain meadows in the Rockies or maple forests in New England. Instead, they claim, "environment" needs to be viewed in a larger context to have meaning. That larger context must be provided by "progressive" causes in general. No reason is offered why this larger construct should necessarily be "progressive," and none suggests itself.

One might think that environmentalists in a conservative country would seek conservative support. Indeed, one might think that environmentalists could recognize natural allies in those who find pleasure and fulfillment in pursuit of wild animals in their habitat, or who have become convinced that God commands them to protect the full abundance of His creation, or who believe that their great country's uncurbed appetite for energy puts it at risk in a dangerous world. By contrast, there is no reason to think—and none is offered—why people of color, feminists, gays, or peace advocates—let alone union members—should be more environmentalist than the public at large. Yet reaching out to hunters and fishers, evangelical Christians, or "geo-green" conservatives is barely mentioned in this debate. Evidently support from those who might have endorsed the war in Iraq, or might oppose gay marriage, or, it seems, might not have voted enthusiastically for Howard Dean will not be welcome in addressing "the greatest calamity in modern history."

Certainly cheap shots against "environmental extremists" have long characterized the rhetoric of conservative publicists and politicians. But a mature political judgment should look beyond the cheap shots on all sides to assess, and make use of, the more fundamental forces at work. It should also examine the widespread distrust of environmentalists among outdoorsmen and evangelicals with no apparent reason for striking poses on this issue.

If, as may well be true, the goal of this debate is not to revitalize environmental protection as such, but to invest its appeal in a generic revival of "progressive" politics, then these criticisms are beside the point. But to the extent that protecting the environment is still a goal of the environmental movement, one may hope that as the reassessment continues, it will include a deeper look in the mirror. ♦

Michael Ramirez

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Go Forth and Replicate

The age of human cloning has arrived.

BY ERIC COHEN

CONSCIENCE is a slippery thing. In 2001, during the first few months of the Bush presidency, America engaged in a debate about the ethics of embryo research. The policy question was narrow: Should the federal government use public funds to support stem cell research that involves embryo destruction? But everyone knew that the issue was actually much larger—about whether we should be the kind of country that uses some (nascent) lives to benefit others, the kind of country that plunges ahead in revolutionary new areas of biotechnology without establishing clear moral limits.

Research advocates made their case by saying that thousands of embryos in fertilization clinics were "going to die anyway," and that of course no one was suggesting we create human embryos solely for research. The ethical argument was unconvincing—being destined to die hardly turns human beings into things, otherwise no one would feel safe in a nursing home. But at least the research advocates endorsed the notion that there was a line they did not want us to cross.

Today, most advocates of embryonic stem cell research offer no limits and seem to accept no compromises. Last week, a team of South Korean and American researchers announced a successful experiment: They had created scores of cloned human embryos that they then destroyed to produce 11 stem cell lines. So we have truly entered the age of human cloning. Any competent team of researchers in a laboratory anywhere in the world can now create cloned human embryos to the blastocyst stage—and then try to implant them in efforts to initiate a pregnancy. If they fail, they can—and some will—try and try again. To be sure, there will be many grotesque failures along the way to cloned babies—just as there were when Dolly the cloned sheep was created. And the children who make it to birth will inevitably suffer deformities and health problems. But the first cloned child is coming soon, and with it a new, terrible moment in the history of modern science.

In America, there are currently no prohibitions and no limits on human cloning. There are no limits on the creation and destruction of human embryos. There are no limits on the implantation of human embryos into animal wombs to generate fetuses for spare parts. There are no limits on the creation of man-animal hybrids using animal sperm and human eggs or human sperm and animal eggs. There are no real ethical limits on anything.

This week, the House of Representatives will likely vote on a bill (sponsored by Delaware Republican Mike Castle and Colorado Democrat Diana DeGette) to provide federal funding for research involving the destruction of embryos left over in fertility clinics. Castle-DeGette is being sold as a moderate measure—very strange, because the current funding policy is already so moderate. Embryo research proceeds in the private sector; many avenues of stem cell research are funded by the government; but those citizens who believe embryo destruction is a grave evil are not forced to be directly complicit in this activity.

The Castle-DeGette bill is also strange because any imagined federal funding in this area would be tiny compared with the $3 billion California has already made available for this research. And it is strange because the loudest advocates for funding research on "spare" embryos are also the loudest advocates for advancing research involving the creation and destruction of cloned human embryos for research.

Indeed, the research lobby has justified so-called "therapeutic cloning" by saying that tailor-made stem cell lines—impossible to make using only "spare" embryos—are what they really need to make this science work for patients. So why all the fuss about federal funding for research on "spare" embryos? Is this all they really want? Or do they simply wish to open the door to funding for research on cloned embryos—i.e., to federally funded human cloning?

President Bush last Friday promised to veto the Castle-DeGette bill, making the House vote a symbolic one. And the President's Council on Bioethics earlier this month released a report describing a series of promising alternatives that may allow us to produce just the kind of disease-specific pluripotent stem cells that researchers want *without* destroying human embryos. Is the vote so urgent that we don't have time at least to explore these alternatives first, especially when it will take a short time to see if they hold promise?

Everyone wants cures for terrible diseases, and no one doubts the compassion that many Castle-DeGette supporters have for those who suffer. But surely those who seek to advance modern medicine should aim to do so in a way that all citizens can embrace, and in a way that ensures that we do not turn the medical ethic on its head, by treating some lives as tools to help others.

One does not need to believe that

Eric Cohen is editor of the New Atlantis *and resident scholar at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.*

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human embryos are human persons to have one's conscience stirred by our current predicament—where the drive to advance stem cell research has apparently made us tolerant of human cloning. One simply needs to believe that we should not bulldoze ahead with ethically hazardous research in an environment with no limits on the brave new world; and that we should try every other avenue of scientific possibility before trampling the values of many fellow citizens to make embryo destruction a national project. This is what the Castle-DeGette bill really does, under the false guise of moderation.

The Democratic left sees stem cell research as a way to make the dehumanization of early human life a prerequisite for being pro-health and pro-science. This is not the path of moderation; it is the path of ideological excess, leading toward funding the kind of research that will bring the age of human cloning, or worse, that much closer. ♦

A Tax Before Dying

African regimes slap a tariff on AIDS drugs.

BY ROGER BATE

AFTER THE CELEBRITIES and goodwill ambassadors have gone home, the campaign to bring low-priced drugs to HIV/AIDS sufferers in poor countries has met unexpected resistance: Governments receiving discounted essential medicines are taxing these products before selling them to the individuals for whom they are meant. The resulting difference in price is significant, in some cases critical.

In South Africa, Emma, who is 19 years old and HIV-positive, quietly tells her story. A month's supply of anti-retroviral triple therapy is likely to cost about $101 for the drugs alone. Of this amount, $14 is paid directly to the South African government in sales tax. To Emma, and many other women, the tax means she can't afford decent food for a whole week. She begins to cry and says, "My two children [HIV-positive as well, though currently not on treatment] also don't have enough to eat."

Governments impose tariffs and taxes for at least two reasons: to raise revenue and to protect domestic industries from international competition. There is little empirical evidence to support protectionism, which forces ordinary consumers to pay more for goods for the sake of powerful special interests. Historically, many wealthy countries have imposed tariffs, but a decade ago, the original 15 E.U. countries and the United States, among others, agreed to eliminate import tariffs, through the World Trade Organization, on around 7,000 pharmaceutical products.

Every nation enjoys the sovereign right to raise revenue. But the decision of cash-strapped governments to tax people on medicines that they had begged other nations to donate or sell at significant discount is, to say the least, odd.

Some take an even dimmer view. Republican senator Sam Brownback is so annoyed that he has introduced, with Democratic senator Mary Landrieu and Republican senator James Inhofe, the Elimination of Neglected Diseases Act. Section nine of the act states that "no agency or department of the United States may donate or otherwise supply medicines or medical devices . . . to a foreign country if such country imposes import tariffs or other import duties on such medicines or medical devices."

The Geneva-based Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria has also taken notice and inserted this clause in its donation policies: "The assistance financed hereunder shall be free from any customs duties, tariffs, import taxes, or other similar levies and taxes (including value-added tax) imposed under laws in effect in the Host Country."

The reason two senators, the Global Fund, and assorted NGOs are angry is that their efforts to treat people like Emma are undermined by the very countries they want to help. The governments of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, India, Nigeria, Brazil, and Morocco—overseeing a combined population of about 1.5 billion—all impose financial barriers of over 19 percent on imported drugs.

Statistical analysis of tariff rates

Roger Bate, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is co-director of Africa Fighting Malaria.

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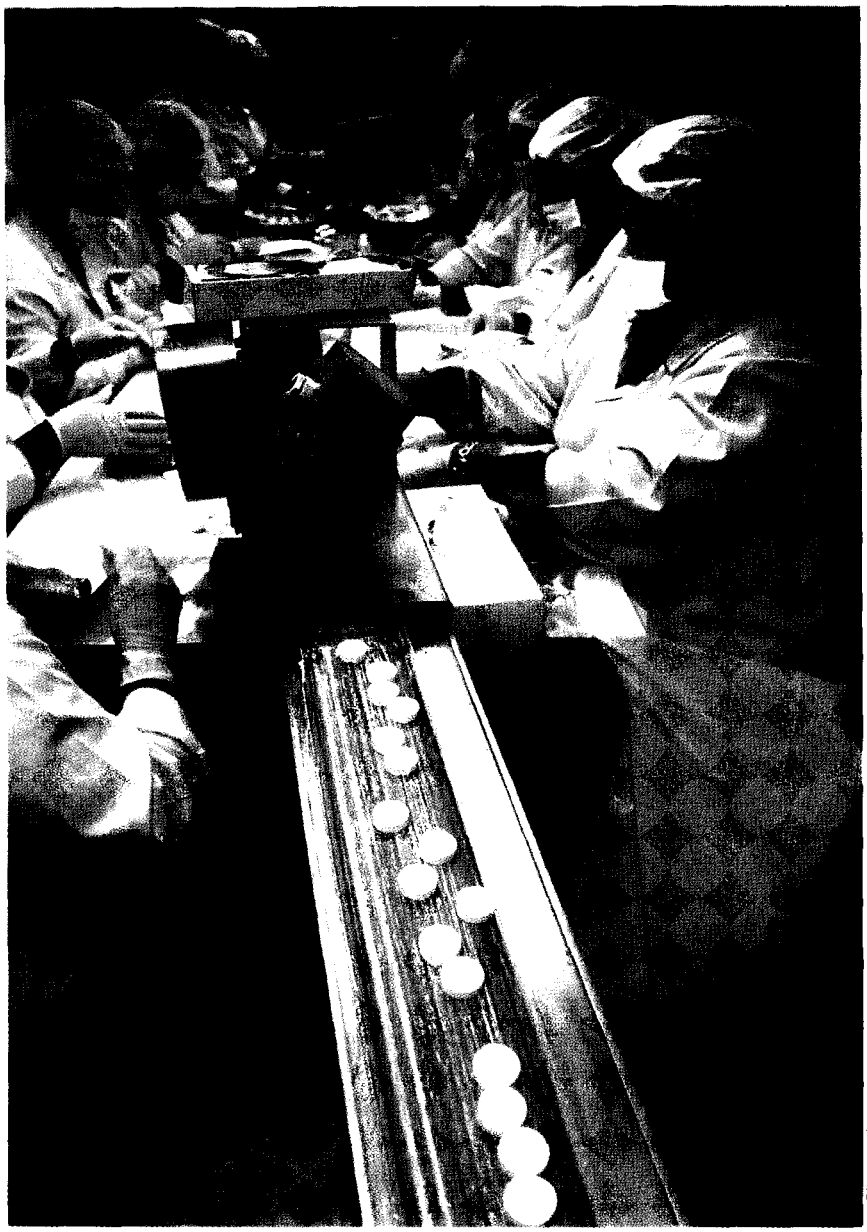

AP Photo / John Macconnico

Pharmaceutical workers in Port Elizabeth, South Africa

and access to essential medicines shows a significant relationship: A 1 percent reduction in tariffs will lead to a 1 percent increase in access. This conclusion (taken from "Taxed to Death," a paper I coauthored for the AEI-Brookings Joint Center) remains tentative given the quality of data and inevitable time lag for collection. Also there are other possible explanations for lack of access, such as illiteracy or low health care expenditure, but income level is included in this analysis. Nevertheless, the results strongly imply that tens of millions more people could gain access to medicine if their governments removed the tariffs on these life-saving drugs.

While India has possibly 8.5 million HIV cases, the highest in the world, it also has one of the lowest figures for access to medicines, 35 percent. This sorry state has begun to change following a reduction in financial barriers from a shocking 61 percent to 20 percent—still quite high, but at least moving in the right direction.

Not everywhere is progress afoot, however. On January 1, 2005, both Kenya and Uganda introduced 10 percent import tariffs, in line with East African Customs Union protocols, on all imported medicines. The harm that these tariffs will cause is likely to be considerable. By the end of 2005, the Kenyan government, after failing to meet earlier targets, had hoped to treat 95,000 patients, an ambitious effort certain to be hobbled by the new tariffs. Dr. Patrick Orege, director of the National AIDS Control Council, says the tariff issue is "problematic" and needs to be "addressed urgently, so that we can meet our goals."

These tariffs not only make it difficult for HIV sufferers to receive medicine, but to receive food as well. The survival rate of HIV patients is strongly dependent on adequate nutrition, and without eating more, many HIV patients are unlikely to get the full benefit. Indeed, Emma's CD4 count (a measure of the health of the immune system) is improving but not as fast as many of her better-fed peers'. Meanwhile, the tax on her weekly allotment of drugs would buy several days' worth of bread, eggs, milk, fruit, vegetables, poultry, and meat.

Dr. Anban Pillay, director of pharmaceutical economy evaluations in the South African Department of Health, says the reduction or removal of value-added taxes on medicines had been under discussion for some time. "We've called for this ourselves, but there seems to be a number of reasons why the treasury is not willing to do so yet."

It doesn't appear that the South African treasury will budge any time soon, but pressure is building. If Brownback's act passes, U.S. donations will depend on the removal of tariffs. Given that the United States has plans to donate over $4 billion in health aid this year (a decent portion of which would go to drugs), this will be a powerful incentive to finally remove these barriers to the proper treatment of millions of HIV sufferers. ♦

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Unmitigated Galloway

Saddam's favorite MP goes to Washington.

By Christopher Hitchens

Every journalist has a list of regrets: of stories that might have been. Somewhere on my personal list is an invitation I received several years ago, from a then-Labour member of parliament named George Galloway. Would I care, he inquired, to join him on a chartered plane to Baghdad? He was hoping to call attention to the sufferings of the Iraqi people under sanctions, and had long been an admirer of my staunch and muscular prose and my commitment to universal justice (I paraphrase only slightly). Indeed, in an article in a Communist party newspaper in 2001 he referred to me as "that great British man of letters" and "the greatest polemicist of our age."

No thanks, was my reply. I had my own worries about the sanctions, but I had also already been on an officially guided visit to Saddam's Iraq and had decided that the next time I went to that terrorized slum it would be with either the Kurdish guerrillas or the U.S. Marines. (I've since fulfilled both ambitions.) Moreover, I knew a bit about Galloway. He had had to resign as the head of a charity called "War on Want," after repaying some disputed expenses for living the high life in dirt-poor countries. Indeed, he was a type well known in the Labour movement. Prolier than thou, and ostentatiously radical, but a bit too fond of the cigars and limos and always looking a bit odd in a suit that was slightly too expensive. By turns aggressive and unctuous, either at your feet or at your throat; a bit of a backslapper, nothing's too good for the working class: what the English call a "wide boy."

This was exactly his demeanor when I ran into him last Tuesday on the sidewalk of Constitution Avenue, outside the Dirksen Senate Office Building, where he was due to testify before the subcommittee that has been uncovering the looting of the U.N. Oil-for-Food program. His short, cocky frame was enveloped in a thicket of recording equipment, and he was holding forth almost uninterrupted until I asked him about his endorsement of Saddam Hussein's payment for suicide-murderers in Israel and the occupied territories. He had evidently been admirably consistent in his attention to my humble work, because he changed tone and said that this was just what he'd expect from a "drink-sodden ex-Trotskyist popinjay." It takes a little more than this to wound your correspondent—I could still hold a martini without spilling it when I was "the greatest polemicist of our age" in 2001—but please note that the real thrust is contained in the word "Trotskyist." Galloway says that the worst day of his entire life was the day the Soviet Union fell. His existence since that dreadful event has involved the pathetic search for an alternative fatherland. He has recently written that, "just as Stalin industrialised the Soviet Union, so on a different scale Saddam plotted Iraq's own Great Leap Forward." I love the word "scale" in that sentence. I also admire the use of the word "plotted."

As it happens, I adore the street-fight and soap-box side of political life, so that when the cluster had moved inside, and when Galloway had taken his seat flanked by his aides and guards, I decided to deny him the 10 minutes of unmolested time that otherwise awaited him before the session began. Denouncing the hearings as a show-trial the previous week, he had claimed that he had written several times to the subcommittee (whose members he has publicly called "lickspittles") asking to be allowed to clear his name, and been ignored. The subcommittee staff denies possessing any record of such an overture. Taking a position near where he was sitting, I asked him loudly if he had brought a copy of his letter, or letters. A fresh hose of abuse was turned upon me, but I persisted in asking, and after awhile others joined in—receiving no answer—so at least he didn't get to sit gravely like a volunteer martyr.

Senators Norm Coleman and Carl Levin then began

Christopher Hitchens is a columnist for Vanity Fair *and a visiting professor at the New School in New York. His new book is* Thomas Jefferson: Author of America.

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Reuters Photo Archive / Faleh Kheiber

Galloway in Baghdad, September 17, 2002

the proceedings, and staff members went through a meticulous presentation, with documents and boards, showing the paperwork of the Iraqi State Oil Marketing Organization and the Iraqi Oil Ministry. These were augmented by testimony from an (unnamed) "senior Saddam regime official," who had vouched for the authenticity of the provenance and the signatures. The exhibits clearly showed that pro-Saddam political figures in France and Russia, and at least one American oil company, had earned the right to profit from illegal oil-trades, and had sweetened the pot by kicking back a percentage to Saddam's personal palace-building and mass grave-digging fund.

In several cases, the documents suggested that a man named Fawaz Zureikat, a Jordanian tycoon, had been intimately involved in these transactions. Galloway's name also appears in parentheses on the Zureikat papers—perhaps as an *aide-memoire* to those processing them—but you must keep in mind that the material does not show transfers directly to Galloway himself; only to Zureikat, his patron and partner and friend. In an analogous way, one cannot accuse Scott Ritter, who made a ferocious documentary attacking the Iraq war, of being in Iraqi pay. One may be aware, though, that the Iraqi-American businessman who financed that film, Shakir al-Khafaji, has since shown up in the captured Oil-for-Food correspondence.

After about 90 minutes of this cumulative testimony, Galloway was seated and sworn, and the humiliation began. The humiliation of the deliberative body, I mean. I once sat in the hearing room while a uniformed Oliver North hectored a Senate committee and instructed the legislative branch in its duties, and not since that day have I felt such alarm and frustration and disgust. Galloway has learned to master the word "neocon" and the acronym "AIPAC," and he insulted the subcommittee for its deference to both of these. He took up much of his time in a demagogic attack on the lie-generated war in Iraq. He announced that he had never traded in a single barrel of oil, and he declared that he had never been a public supporter of the Saddam Hussein regime. As I had guessed he would, he made the most of the anonymity of the "senior Saddam regime official," and protested at not knowing the identity of his accuser. He improved on this by suggesting that the person concerned might now be in a cell in Abu Ghraib.

In a small way—an exceedingly small way—this had the paradoxical effect of making me proud to be British. Parliament trains its sons in a hard school of debate and unscripted exchange, and so does the British Labour movement. You get your retaliation in first, you rise to a point of order, you heckle and you watch out for hecklers. The torpid majesty of a Senate proceeding does nothing to prepare you for a Galloway, who is in addition a man without embarrassment who has stayed just on the right side of many inquiries into his character and his accounting methods. He has, for example, temporarily won a libel case against the *Daily Telegraph* in London, which printed similar documents about him that were found in the Oil

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Ministry just after the fall of Baghdad. The newspaper claimed a public-interest defense, and did not explicitly state that the documents were genuine. Galloway, for his part, carefully did not state that they were false, either. The case has now gone to appeal.

When estimating the propensity of anyone to take money or gifts, one must also balance the propensity of a regime to offer them. I once had an Iraqi diplomat contact in London, who later became one of Saddam's ministers. After inviting him to dinner one night, I noticed that he had wordlessly left a handsome bag, which contained a small but nice rug, several boxes of Cuban cigars (which I don't smoke), and several bottles of single malt Scotch. I was at the time a fairly junior editor at a socialist weekly. More recently, I have interviewed a very senior and reliable U.N. arms inspector in Iraq, who was directly offered an enormous bribe by Tariq Aziz himself, and who duly reported the fact to the U.S. government. If the Baathists would risk approaching this particular man, it seems to me, they must have tried it with practically everybody. Quite possibly, though, the Saddam regime decided that Galloway was entirely incorruptible, and would consider such an inducement beneath him.

EPA / Landov / Matthew Cavanaugh

Galloway in Washington, May 17

Such speculation to one side, the subcommittee and its staff had a tranche of information on Galloway, and on his record for truthfulness. It would have been a simple matter for them to call him out on a number of things. First of all, and easiest, he had dared to state under oath that he had not been a defender of the Saddam regime. This, from the man who visited Baghdad after the first Gulf war and, addressing Saddam, said: "Sir, I salute your courage, your strength, your indefatigability." How's that for lickspittling? And even if you make allowances for emotional public moments, you can't argue with Galloway's own autobiography, blush-makingly entitled *I'm Not the Only One*, which was published last spring and from which I offer the following extracts:

The state of Kuwait is "clearly a part of the greater Iraqi whole, stolen from the motherland by perfidious Albion." (Kuwait existed long before Iraq had even been named.) "In my experience none of the Ba'ath leaders have displayed any hostility to Jews." The post-Gulf war massacres of Kurds and Shia in 1991 were part of "a civil war that involved massive violence on both sides." Asked about Saddam's palaces after one of his many fraternal visits, he remarked, "Our own head of state has a fair bit of real estate herself." Her Majesty the Queen and her awful brood may take up a lot of room, but it's hardly comparable to one palace per province, built during a time of famine. Discussing Saddam's direct payments to the families of suicide-murderers—the very question he had refused to answer when I asked him—he once again lapsed into accidental accuracy, as with the Stalin comparison, and said that "as the martyred know, he put Iraq's money where his mouth was." That's true enough: It was indeed Iraq's money, if a bit more than Saddam's mouth.

At the hearing, also, Galloway was half-correct in yelling at the subcommittee that he had been a critic of Saddam Hussein when Donald Rumsfeld was still making friendly visits to Baghdad. Here, a brief excursion into the aridities of left history may elucidate more than the Galloway phenomenon.

There came a time, in the late 1970s, when the Iraqi Communist party realized the horrific mistake it had made in joining the Baath party's Revolutionary Command Council. The Communists in Baghdad, as I can testify from personal experience and interviews at the time, began to protest—too late—at the unbelievable cruelty of Saddam's purge of the army and the state: a prelude to his seizure of total power in a full-blown fascist coup. The consequence of this, in Britain, was the setting-up of a group named CARDRI: the Campaign Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq. Many democratic socialists and liberals supported this organization, but there was no doubting that its letterhead and its active staff were Communist volunteers. And Galloway joined it. At the time, it is at least half true to say, the United States distinctly preferred Saddam's Iraq to Khomeini's Iran, and acted accordingly. Thus a leftist could attack Saddam for being, among other things, an American client. We ought not to forget the shame of American policy at that time, because the preference for Saddam outlived the war

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with Iran, and continued into the postwar Anfal campaign to exterminate the Kurds. In today's "antiwar" movement, you may still hear the echoes of that filthy compromise, in the pseudo-ironic jibe that "we" used to be Saddam's ally.

But mark the sequel. It must have been in full knowledge, then, of that repression, and that genocide, and of the invasion of Kuwait and all that ensued from it, that George Galloway shifted his position and became an outright partisan of the Iraqi Baath. There can be only two explanations for this, and they do not by any means exclude one another. The first explanation, which would apply to many leftists of different stripes, is that anti-Americanism simply trumps everything, and that once Saddam Hussein became an official enemy of Washington the whole case was altered. Given what Galloway has said at other times, in defense of Slobodan Milosevic for example, it is fair to assume that he would have taken such a position for nothing: without, in other words, the hope of remuneration.

There was another faction, however, that was, relatively speaking, nonpolitical. During the imposition of international U.N. sanctions on Iraq, and the creation of the Oil-for-Food system, it swiftly became known to a class of middlemen that lavish pickings were to be had by anyone who could boast an insider contact in Baghdad. This much is well known and has been solidly established, by the Volcker report and by the Senate subcommittee. During the material time, George Galloway received hard-to-get visas for Iraq on multiple occasions, and admits to at least two personal meetings with Saddam Hussein and more than ten with his "dear friend" Tariq Aziz. But as far as is known by me, he confined his activity on these occasions to pro-regime propaganda, with Iraqi crowds often turned out by the authorities to applaud him, and provide a useful platform in both parliament and the press back home.

However, his friend and business partner, Fawaz Zureikat, didn't concern himself so much with ideological questions (though he did try to set up a broadcasting service for Saddam). He was, as Galloway happily testified, involved in a vast range of deals in Baghdad. But Galloway's admitted knowledge of this somehow does not extend to Zureikat's involvement in any Oil-for-Food transactions, which are now *prima facie* established in black and white by the subcommittee's report. Galloway, indeed, has arranged to be adequately uninformed about this for some time now: It is two years since he promised the BBC that he would establish and make known the facts about his Zureikat connection.

Here then are these facts, as we know them without his help. In 1998, Galloway founded something, easily confused with a charity, known as the Mariam Appeal. The ostensible aim of the appeal was to provide treatment in Britain for a 4-year-old Iraqi girl named Mariam Hamza, who suffered from leukemia. An announced secondary aim was to campaign against the sanctions then in force, and still a third, somewhat occluded, aim was to state that Mariam Hamza and many others like her had contracted cancer from the use of depleted-uranium shells by American forces in the first Gulf war. A letter exists, on House of Commons writing paper, signed by Galloway and appointing Fawaz Zureikat as his personal representative in Iraq, on any and all matters connected to the Mariam Appeal.

Although it was briefly claimed by one of its officers that the Appeal raised most of its money from ordinary citizens, Galloway has since testified that the bulk of the revenue came from the ruler of the United Arab Emirates and from a Saudi prince. He has also conceded that Zureikat was a very generous donor. The remainder of the funding is somewhat opaque, since the British Charity Commissioners, who monitor such things, began an investigation in 2003. This investigation was inconclusive. The commissioners were able to determine that the Mariam Appeal, which had used much of its revenue for political campaigning, had not but ought to have been legally registered as a charity. They were not able to determine much beyond this, because it was then announced that the account books of the Appeal had been removed, first to Amman, Jordan, and then to Baghdad. This is the first charity or proto-charity in history to have disposed of its records in that way.

To this day, George Galloway defiantly insists, as he did before the senators, that he has "never seen a barrel of oil, owned one, bought one, sold one, and neither has anybody on my behalf." As a Clintonian defense this has its admirable points: I myself have never seen a kilowatt, but I know that a barrel is also a unit and not an entity. For the rest, his defense would be more impressive if it answered any charge that has actually been made. Galloway is not supposed by anyone to have been an oil trader. He is asked, simply, to say what he knows about his chief fundraiser, nominee, and crony. And when asked this, he flatly declines to answer. We are therefore invited by him to assume that, having earlier acquired a justified reputation for loose bookkeeping in respect of "charities," he switched sides in Iraq, attached himself to a regime known for giving and receiving bribes, appointed a notorious middleman as his envoy, kept company with the corrupt inner circle of the Baath party, helped organize a vigorous campaign to retain that party in power, and was not a penny piece the better off for it. I think I believe this

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as readily as any other reasonable and objective person would. If you wish to pursue the matter with Galloway himself, you will have to find the unlisted number for his villa in Portugal.

Even if the matter of subornation and bribery had never arisen, there would remain the crucial question of Iraq itself. It was said during the time of sanctions on that long-suffering country that the embargo was killing, or had killed, as many as a million people, many of them infants. Give credit to the accusers here. Some of the gravamen of the charge must be true. Add the parasitic regime to the sanctions, over 12 years, and it is clear that the suffering of average Iraqis must have been inordinate.

There are only two ways this suffering could have been relieved. Either the sanctions could have been lifted, as Galloway and others demanded, or the regime could have been removed. The first policy, if followed without conditions, would have untied the hands of Saddam. The second policy would have had the dual effect of ending sanctions and terminating a hideous and lawless one-man rule. But when the second policy was proposed, the streets filled with people who absolutely opposed it. Saying farewell to the regime was, evidently, too high a price to pay for relief from sanctions.

Let me phrase this another way: Those who had alleged that a million civilians were dying from sanctions were willing, nay eager, to keep those same murderous sanctions if it meant preserving Saddam! This is repellent enough in itself. If the Saddam regime was cheating its terrified people of food and medicine in order to finance its own propaganda, that would perhaps be in character. But if it were to be discovered that any third parties had profited from the persistence of "sanctions plus regime," prolonging the agony and misery thanks to personal connections, then one would have to become quite judgmental.

The bad faith of a majority of the left is instanced by four things (apart, that is, from mass demonstrations in favor of prolonging the life of a fascist government). First, the antiwar forces never asked the Iraqi left what it wanted, because they would have heard very clearly that their comrades wanted the overthrow of Saddam. (President Jalal Talabani's party, for example, is a member in good standing of the Socialist International.) This is a betrayal of what used to be called internationalism. Second, the left decided to scab and blackleg on the Kurds, whose struggle is the oldest cause of the left in the Middle East. Third, many leftists and liberals stressed the cost of the Iraq intervention as against the cost of domestic expenditure, when if they had been looking for zero-sum comparisons they might have been expected to cite waste in certain military programs, or perhaps the cost of the "war on drugs." This, then, was mere cynicism. Fourth, and as mentioned, their humanitarian talk about the sanctions turned out to be the most inexpensive hypocrisy.

George Galloway—having been rightly expelled by the British Labour party for calling for "jihad" against British troops, and having since then hailed the nihilism and sadism and sectarianism that goes by the lazy name of the Iraqi "insurgency" or, in his circles, "resistance"—ran for election in a new seat in East London and was successful in unseating the Labour incumbent. His party calls itself RESPECT, which stands for "Respect, Equality, Socialism, Peace, Environment, Community, Trade Unionism." (So that really ought to be RESPECTU, except that it would then sound less like an Aretha Franklin song and more like an organ of the Romanian state under Ceausescu.)

The defeated incumbent, Oona King, is of mixed African and Jewish heritage, and had to endure an appalling whispering campaign, based on her sex and her combined ethnicities. Who knows who started this torrent of abuse? Galloway certainly has, once again, remained adequately uninformed about it. His chief appeal was to the militant Islamist element among Asian immigrants who live in large numbers in his district, and his main organizational muscle was provided by a depraved sub-Leninist sect called the Socialist Workers party. The servants of the one god finally meet the votaries of the one-party state. Perfect. To this most opportunist of alliances, add some Tory and Liberal Democrat "tactical voters" whose hatred of Tony Blair eclipses everything else.

Perhaps I may be allowed a closing moment of sentiment here? To the left, the old East End of London was once near-sacred ground. It was here in 1936 that a massive demonstration of longshoremen, artisans, and Jewish refugees and migrants made a human wall and drove back a determined attempt by Sir Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts to mount a march of intimidation. The event is still remembered locally as "The Battle of Cable Street." That part of London, in fact, was one of the few place in Europe where the attempt to raise the emblems of fascism was defeated by force.

And now, on the same turf, there struts a little popinjay who defends dictatorship abroad and who trades on religious sectarianism at home. Within a month of his triumph in a British election, he has flown to Washington and spat full in the face of the Senate. A megaphone media in London, and a hysterical fan-club of fundamentalists and political thugs, saw to it that he returned as a conquering hero and all-round celeb. If only the supporters of regime change, and the friends of the Afghan and Iraqi and Kurdish peoples, could manifest anything like the same resolve and determination. ♦

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Saddam's Business Partners

How the Oil-for-Food scandal happened and why it matters

By Stephen F. Hayes

When United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan quipped several years ago that he could "do business" with Saddam Hussein, he meant it figuratively.

In light of the substantive charges coming out of the ever-expanding Oil-for-Food scandal, the throwaway line seems revealing or at least ironic.

"I think we have to take him literally," says Republican senator Norm Coleman, who is leading one of eight investigations into the corruption and mismanagement of the U.N.'s largest-ever humanitarian relief effort.

The basic outline of the scandal is simple: Saddam Hussein used the Oil-for-Food program to circumvent U.N. sanctions imposed after the Gulf war and to enrich himself and his allies. He did this by bribing leading journalists and diplomats and demanding kickbacks from those who profited from selling Iraqi oil. That he was able to do so indicates at least that the U.N. badly mismanaged the program it set up in December 1996. None of this is particularly astonishing. No one is surprised to learn that Saddam Hussein cheats, that politicians take bribes, and that the competence level of the U.N. bureaucracy is, well, suboptimal.

Nevertheless, the details of the Oil-for-Food scandal—who participated, and what they apparently did—are jaw-dropping. Vladimir Putin's chief of staff, Alexander Voloshin, appears to have accepted millions of dollars in oil-soaked bribes from Saddam Hussein. The same appears to be true of the former interior minister of France, Charles Pasqua, a close friend of President Jacques Chirac. And the same appears to be true of three high-ranking U.N. executives including Benon Sevan, hand-picked by Kofi Annan to administer the Oil-for-Food program. Oil-for-Food money even went to terrorist organizations supported by the Iraqi regime and, according to U.S. investigators, might be funding the insurgency today.

Through seven years' worth of deals that should never have been made, compromises that should never have been struck, and concessions that should never have been granted, Oil-for-Food strengthened Saddam Hussein. What we know about all of this now is a fraction of what will eventually be uncovered. But even this limited understanding should mean an end to Kofi Annan's term as secretary general. The sad history of U.N. incompetence on Iraq generally and in the Oil-for-Food program specifically is enough to make you wonder why George W. Bush settled for John Bolton rather than, say, John Rocker to push for reform at the world body.

Among the many bizarre aspects of the U.N. Oil-for-Food program is its premise: *If we, the international community, allow Saddam Hussein to take in more money by selling oil, we can end the suffering of the Iraqi people even while maintaining U.N. sanctions.*

Saddam Hussein argued that Iraqis were dying because the sanctions deprived him of the money to save them. And while there is little doubt that the sanctions left Iraqis much poorer than they were before the Gulf war—annual incomes dropped nearly to a third of what they had been in 1990—it was less clear that Saddam Hussein was similarly destitute.

"Saddam's family profits from covert sales of Iraqi oil and dominance of the black market, where many of the donated medicines and food end up," said then-CIA director John Deutch in public testimony before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on September 25, 1996. "Iraqi government funds are used to maintain lavish lifestyles. Baghdad, for example, has begun working on 48 new palaces and VIP residences during the past five years, increasing the total number of estates available to Saddam Hussein to at least 78."

Iraqis were dying because Saddam Hussein was killing them. He was actively killing them, Deutch said, by

Stephen F. Hayes is a senior writer at The Weekly Standard.

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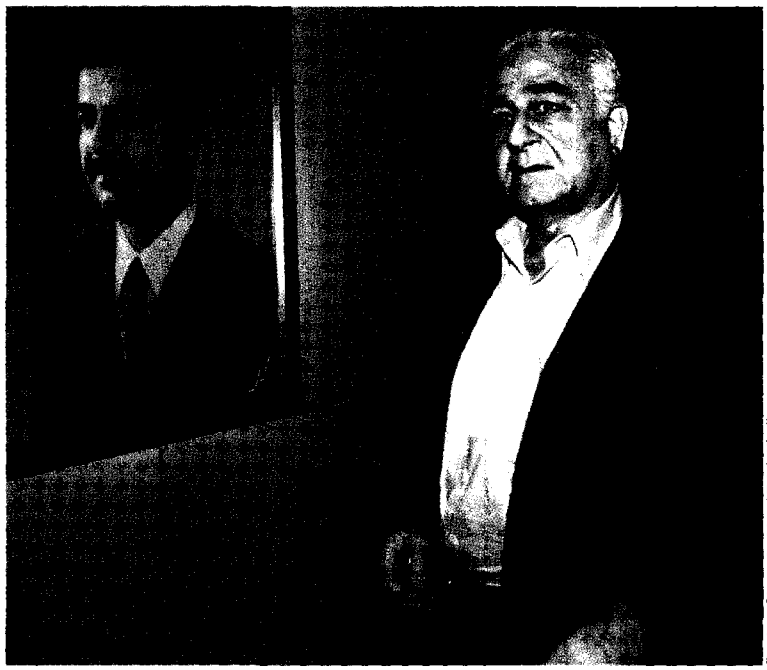

Reuters Photo Archive / Faleh Kheiber

Oil-for-Food administrator Benon Sevan in Baghdad, January 14, 2002

executing his political opponents and by draining the marshes of central Iraq that provided sustenance to hundreds of thousands of Shiites. And he was passively killing them by refusing to cooperate with U.N. inspectors and stealing food and medicine intended to ease their suffering.

None of this mattered to France and Russia, Hussein's chief backers on the Security Council. From virtually the beginning, they wanted the sanctions to end so that they could resume their robust, pre-Gulf war business with the Iraqi government. But Hussein made their argument difficult. For the first five years after the 1991 cease-fire, he had continually violated its terms. He had failed to account for his stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. He had not cooperated fully with U.N. weapons inspectors. He had smuggled oil out of his country for sale on the black market. He had harbored a fugitive from the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. He had attempted to assassinate President George H.W. Bush. He had amassed troops on the Kuwaiti border, threatening a new attack. And he had dispatched 40,000 Iraqi soldiers to attack the Kurds in northern Iraq.

The United States and Britain, Hussein's chief opponents on the Security Council, wanted to maintain the sanctions. But by the mid-1990s it had become clear that Hussein was winning the public relations battle. Much of the world blamed the Americans and the British for the suffering of the Iraqi people. The Clinton administration wanted a compromise.

In April 1995, as U.N. inspectors traversed Iraq looking for proscribed weapons that Saddam was to have destroyed, the U.N. Security Council unanimously passed a proposal that would allow Iraq to sell $2 billion worth of oil every six months. The deal would be renewed after rigorous inspections by the Security Council to ensure that Hussein wasn't cheating. The money would go into an escrow account operated under U.N. scrutiny. Some of it would be used to compensate Kuwaiti victims of the Gulf war. Some of it would cover the cost of the U.N. weapons inspections. The bulk of the money, however, would go to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people under the U.N. sanctions. Of the $2 billion Iraq would earn from oil sales, approximately $1.3 billion would be spent on food, medicine, and other humanitarian goods. The money would be distributed from the escrow account to vendors across the globe, again with significant input from Saddam Hussein.

Iraq rejected the proposal as a violation of its sovereignty, as it had once before. The real reason was less high-minded: Hussein needed Iraqis to keep dying. He rightly interpreted as weakness the eagerness of the United States and others on the Security Council to ease the sanctions on his regime. Hussein "understood that if he exercised the option of exporting oil under the condition that only humanitarian aid could be delivered, then it would relieve the pressure on the [Security] Council to lift sanctions in their entirety," Charles Duelfer, a CIA special adviser on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, told a Senate panel last fall. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who was the U.N. secretary general at the time, shrugged off Iraq's lack of cooperation with U.N. inspectors and promised Hussein that the new proposal would be a "first step toward the total lifting of the sanctions against Iraq."

When Saddam Hussein's son-in-law, Hussein Kamel, defected to Jordan on August 8, 1995, he effectively ended any hope for the total lifting of sanctions. Kamel, the nephew of Ali Hassan al-Majid, better known as "Chemical Ali," was a senior regime official with responsibility for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. He revealed the elaborate schemes Hussein had put in place to hide his programs from U.N. inspectors. The Iraqi regime, not knowing what Kamel had disclosed to U.N. officials, was forced to admit a far greater level of WMD production and sophistication than had been known. The French and Russians, who had offered praise for the regime's alleged cooperation, were silenced. The drive to end sanctions was finished, or rather stalled.

Five months later, in December 1995, a U.N. agency known as the Food and Agriculture Organization produced a study that estimated 567,000 children had died as a result of the sanctions. The authors noted the seeming contradic-

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tion between the determination of U.N. humanitarian agencies to alleviate suffering and the efforts of the U.N. Security Council to enforce sanctions. The embargo, they concluded, threatened to undermine "the moral, financial, and political standing of the international community."

Another study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) found that some 4,500 Iraqi children were dying each month from disease and starvation, and a third U.N. study, this one by the U.N. World Food Program, determined that approximately 180,000 Iraqi children under five were suffering from malnutrition. The pressure had returned.

Corbis / Sygma / Rick Maiman

Kofi Annan at the Republican Palace, February 23, 1998

The details of a U.N.-supervised program allowing Hussein to sell more oil in order to better provide for his people were debated for another year, with U.N. negotiators, encouraged by France and Russia, acceding to Hussein's many demands. One concession, little noticed at the time, was a provision that would allow Hussein to choose who bought and sold his oil, pending approval by the U.N. On December 10, 1996, the deal was struck.

"This is a victory for the poorest of the poor of Iraq, for the women, the children, the sick, and the disabled," said a very pleased Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The U.N. chief was not the only one who was happy. A triumphant Saddam Hussein traveled to oil-rich Kirkuk for a photo-op, where he smiled broadly as he opened a ceremonial spigot. Iraq held a nationwide celebration to mark the occasion.

Asked by a reporter about the likelihood that Hussein could circumvent or manipulate the restrictions, deputy U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Edward Gnehm was dubious. "We designed our resolution for a cheater," he explained. "We know him. We know him well."

Looking at that formulation now—"we designed our resolution for a cheater"—Gnehm seems positively prophetic.

Whatever the intentions of its planners, the Oil-for-Food program actually worked like this: Iraq designated certain individuals or entities as potential purchasers of Iraqi oil. It gave them oil "allocations" or "vouchers" (not foreseen in the program as designed by the U.N.), which they could either use to purchase oil themselves or sell to third parties. Because the regime severely limited the number of recipients of these allocations, the recipients were able to resell the oil after attaching a surcharge—usually between 3 and 30 cents a barrel. Sales were usually a minimum of 1 million barrels, so the profits from the surcharges were significant.

Beginning in 1998, Hussein began to shift his allocations from oil companies to politicians, journalists, and terrorist groups. Mark Greenblatt, a lead investigator for the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, described it this way. "His plan was simple. Rather than giving allocations to traditional oil purchasers, he gave allocations to foreign officials, journalists, even hostile terrorist entities, who then flipped their oil allocations to traditional oil companies in return for a sizable commission. In doing so, Saddam could give a foreign official or a journalist hundreds of thousands of dollars without ever paying a dime."

Officials at the highest levels of the Iraqi regime—including Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, and Oil Minister Amir Muhammad Rashid—chose the recipients.

The U.N. did not see any of this until the traditional oil companies contracted with Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organization, known as SOMO. (One notable exception to this U.N. ignorance appears to have been Benon Sevan, the administrator of Oil-for-Food, who knew about the illegal allocations because he personally was receiving some. More on that later.) The Iraqis, however, kept scrupulous records of each step in their bribery scheme.

On September 1, 2000, at the direction of Saddam Hussein, SOMO began demanding a "surcharge" from each purchaser of Iraqi oil. According to the Coleman-Levin investigation, these surcharges ranged from 10 to 30 cents per barrel and were paid directly to the Iraqi regime, often through another party who, of course, took a cut. The scheme worked for two years until the United States and Britain insisted that it end. By that time, however, Hussein had made profits of nearly $230 million outside of the U.N.

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process, in one of several illegal mechanisms he devised to enrich himself.

Over roughly the same period, according to the Duelfer report, the Iraqi regime increased exponentially its spending on the country's Military Industrial Commission—from $7.8 million in 1998 to $500 million in 2003.

It is true that much of Iraq's illicit funding during the period of the Oil-for-Food program came from ordinary oil smuggling unrelated to the U.N. But the improvements to the oil production processes that allowed Iraq to produce and distribute oil legally also helped the illegal oil trade. The Duelfer Report estimates that Iraq's oil-smuggling profits from 1996-2003 were nearly triple those of the previous five years.

At a Senate hearing last Tuesday, the Coleman-Levin investigators highlighted the bribes the Iraqi regime paid to foreign officials from Britain, Russia, and France. The dramatic testimony of British member of parliament George Galloway, who unconvincingly denied knowledge of any Iraqi oil transactions, garnered most of the headlines. But Galloway is a well-known apologist for Saddam Hussein, and as a propagandist for the regime he was rather ineffective.

Two other men under investigation by the Coleman-Levin committee, however, were close advisers to the two chief opponents of the Iraq war—Jacques Chirac and Vladimir Putin.

One Coleman-Levin report concerns former French interior minister Charles Pasqua, who is described as a "long-time friend and political ally" of Chirac. The report says Pasqua "was a vocal supporter of restoring economic ties with the Hussein regime" as interior minister and charges him with receiving allocations for 11 million barrels of Iraqi oil. Pasqua has denied any involvement.

A second report focuses on oil allocations to the Russian Presidential Council. "Russia topped the list of nations from whom the Hussein regime wanted support at the Security Council. As a result, the Hussein regime granted allocations to Russian individuals, political parties, and others due to their good relationship with Iraq and their support for the lifting of sanctions. . . . The scale of the oil allocations given to Russian individuals and political parties was substantial, totaling approximately 30 percent of all the oil allocated during the course of the program."

Many of these allocations went to the Unity party, a predecessor of the Unified Russia party, which currently holds 37 percent of the seats in the Russian Duma. The report describes it as "a pro-Kremlin party associated with Russian president Vladimir Putin." In a prison interview last month with Senate investigators, Tariq Aziz said the Unity party was chosen for the allocations "because Russia was taking positions at the Security Council that were favorable to Iraq."

Alexander Voloshin was the head of the Russian Presidential Council and, until his resignation in 2003, the top adviser to Russian president Vladimir Putin. He has been called the Russian Karl Rove for his close relationship to Putin, and, according to the Coleman-Levin report, "there is little debate over the magnitude of Mr. Voloshin's influence in Russian government during the Oil-for-Food Program." In all, the Russian Presidential Council is alleged to have received allocations for 90 million barrels of Iraqi oil. Another well-known but less influential Russian politician, the ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky, also received oil allocations under Oil-for-Food, good for more than 70 million barrels.

The Coleman-Levin reports base their conclusions on a wide variety of evidence including documents from the Iraqi Oil Ministry and the State Oil Marketing Organization that record the transactions in detail. Investigators also conducted dozens of interviews with senior Iraqi officials, including Aziz and Ramadan, who supported and in many cases expanded upon the documentation.

In early June, the Coleman-Levin committee will make available a similar report on the Iraqi regime's funding of terrorist entities. They will lay out a case study of the allocations provided to the Mujahedin e-Khalq (MEK), a terrorist group Hussein funded to conduct operations against Iran. Michael Scheuer, former head of the CIA's Osama bin Laden unit and author of *Imperial Hubris*, described some of the work the MEK did for Hussein in his 2002 book, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes*. Osama bin Laden "may have trained some fighters in Iraq at camps run by Saddam's anti-Iran force, the Mujahedin e-Khalq (MEK)," Scheuer writes. "The first group of bin Laden's fighters is reported to have been sent to MEK camps in June 1998; MEK cadre were also then providing technical and military training for Taliban forces and running the Taliban's anti-Iran propaganda."

That the U.N. was apparently clueless as this scheme unfolded is bad enough. (And they could hardly have been clueless if they had been reading reporter Claudia Rosett's peerless investigative pieces.) What's worse, though, is that several high-ranking U.N. officials appear to have been involved in the illegality. Court documents related to the prosecution of Samir Vincent, the first American to be charged in the Oil-for-Food scandal, refer to Vincent's meetings with U.N. officials. Vincent was acting as an unregistered agent of the government of Iraq when he "and other individuals, including

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United Nations officials, met in Manhattan in an effort to secure terms favorable to the Government of Iraq in connection with the adoption and implementation of Resolution 986"—the resolution that created the Oil-for-Food program. Vincent is now cooperating with prosecutors.

And last month, a criminal complaint against South Korean Tongsun Park, who also acted on Hussein's behalf, mentions "U.N. Official #1" and "U.N. Official #2" as recipients of bribes from the former Iraqi regime. The two officials remain unnamed. Many news articles have pointed out that Park is a longtime friend of former U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and a business associate of Maurice Strong, an adviser to Kofi Annan who currently serves as the U.N. envoy to the six-party talks on North Korea. Both men have denied any wrongdoing.

AP Photo / Jassim Mohammeder

Vladimir Zhirinovsky in Baghdad, November 3, 1998

So has Kojo Annan, Kofi Annan's son. The younger Annan was consulting for the Swiss firm Cotecna while the firm was bidding to win a contract to monitor the Oil-for-Food program. Cotecna won the contract on December 31, 1998, the same day Kojo Annan's consultancy ended. Cotecna continued to pay Kojo some $2,500 per month as part of a "non-compete" clause. The payments continued until February 2004. Both Annans and Cotecna contend that Kojo's work had nothing to do with Oil-for-Food.

The same cannot be said for Benon Sevan, since he is the man Kofi Annan handpicked to run the Oil-for-Food program. According to an interim report from the Oil-for-Food investigation commissioned by the U.N. itself, Sevan "repeatedly solicited" oil allocations worth about $1 million for a company called African Middle East Petroleum. Paul Volcker, chairman of the U.N.-backed investigation, said, "The Iraqi government, in providing such allocations, certainly thought they were buying influence."

Volcker added: "Mr. Sevan placed himself in a grave and continuing conflict-of-interest situation that violated explicit U.N. rules and violated the standards of integrity essential to a high-level international civil servant."

I visited Norm Coleman in his Senate office last Wednesday. He spoke in measured terms until I asked him about Benon Sevan. "The first Volcker report concludes with a summary that this is a conflict of interest. It wasn't a conflict of interest. Sevan lied to investigators. Sevan lies. He lied to us about money that he has publicly declared. He lied to investigators. He lied about his relationship with a person who ultimately got the contract for the oil. We then get documentation that in fact Sevan lobbied for this guy to get Iraqi oil for his company. That's probable cause that he has committed a crime. And yet it was characterized as a conflict of interest?"

Coleman races through his list of grievances until that last sentence, at which point he pauses between each word. Conflict . . . of . . . interest? He shakes his head in disbelief, and then he's off again.

"That's not a conflict of interest. Sevan should be available—he shouldn't have immunity. I'm kind of on a rant here, but Sevan—up until we raised the issue, the U.N. was paying his legal fees. With Oil-for-Food money! Here's a guy who has lied to investigators—probable cause to believe he has committed a crime—and Kofi was going to pay his legal fees until we raised the issue!"

In recent weeks, the Volcker committee itself has come under scrutiny after two of its top investigators, former FBI agent Robert Parton and his deputy, Miranda Duncan, quit the probe. The Volcker committee originally explained their departures by claiming simply that the pair had finished their work. Shortly thereafter, the committee cited "personal reasons." Eventually, the truth emerged. Both Parton and Duncan believed that the Volcker committee's report on Kofi and Kojo Annan was too forgiving of the U.N. secretary general. In the days since, Parton has accused the Volcker committee of violating the confidentiality agreement it had with a witness, and that witness himself has accused the Annans of witness tampering.

Is it any wonder that Coleman wants to investigate whether Kofi Annan was—quite literally—doing business with Saddam Hussein? ♦

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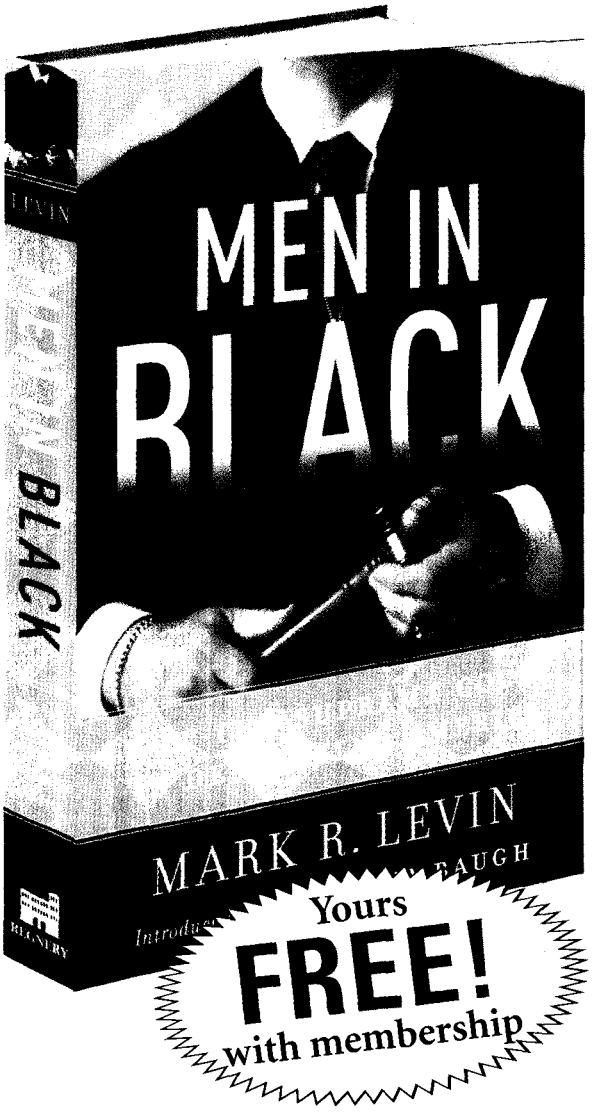

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George Patton, Omar Bradley, Bernard Montgomery

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Generals at War

With the Germans and with each other

By Andrew Roberts

When one considers the rivalry between several of the senior commanders serving under Dwight D. Eisenhower on the Western Front in the last 18 months of the Second World War—but principally among George S. Patton, Bernard Montgomery, and Omar Bradley—one has occasionally to be reminded that they were, at the time, three-star generals. For spite, gangings-up, showing off, bitchiness, whining to their superiors, and general pettiness, they might just as easily have been squabbling 13-year-old schoolgirls. These three well-researched and forthrightly written books illustrate the incredible degree to which pique, pride, lust for fame, and intense competitiveness affected the actions of some of the greatest soldiers of their age.

Andrew Roberts is the author, most recently, of Hitler and Churchill: Secrets of Leadership.

General George S. Patton was, as Trevor Royle points out in the preface of his intensely readable short biography, "one of the few U.S. Army officers with a vision of how armor might be used in battle," insights that Patton had gained when fighting with the U.S. Tank Corps in World War I. But something in his personality also meant that he felt the need to wear riding breeches, riding boots, ivory-handled revolvers, and to drive around "in flashy motorcades that always ensured that he was noticed and the center of attention."

Patton
Old Blood and Guts
by Trevor Royle
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 324 pp., $14.99

Monty and Patton
Two Paths to Victory
by Michael Reynolds
Spellmount, 368 pp., $47.75

The Field Marshal's Revenge
The Breakdown of a Special Relationship
by Charles Whiting
Spellmount, 241 pp., $29.95

On two infamous occasions in August 1943, Patton became more of a center of attention than even he desired when, during the advance on Messina in Sicily (which he captured partly to prevent Montgomery from doing so), he slapped a GI whom he called an "arrant coward," and then a week later threatened to pistol-whip another soldier, who he called "a yellow bastard" and "a disgrace to the Army." Both men were suffering from what we today recognize as a form of shell-shock, or post-traumatic stress

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George Patton, Dwight Eisenhower

Bettmann / CORBIS

disorder. In the second incident, at the 93rd Evacuation Hospital, the senior medical officer had to place himself between Patton and his victim, Private Paul G. Bennett, as Patton raged: "I won't have those cowardly bastards hanging around our hospitals. We'll probably have to shoot them sometime, anyway, or we'll raise a breed of morons!"

Patton was very keen on breeding. He himself came from a distinguished line of soldiers, and he was as proud of his military ancestors as any samurai or junker. His grandfather had commanded a brigade in the Civil War, and the history of the Confederacy was a living thing for him, as when he likened Operation Torch in 1942 to the Battle of Manassas, and wondered what Robert E. Lee or Stonewall Jackson would do in any given strategic situation.

The obverse side of Patton's racial pride was a virulent anti-Semitism; he believed in the Bolshevist-Zionist conspiracy, and his prejudice was in no way lessened after the liberation of the Nazi death camps. Royle fails to mention this in an otherwise fine work. To appreciate quite how weird Patton was, Royle states that he "actually believed that he had been reincarnated many times, usually as a soldier." By the end of his career, the Army had placed a psychiatrist on his staff to keep an eye on him, and was monitoring his phone calls.

Although Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery is popularly believed to have been Patton's greatest enemy, the Germans hardly enter the lists in terms of these inter-general enmities. By the way, it was General Omar Bradley, in fact, who reduced Patton to a gibbering wreck when, after the Sicilian campaign, Bradley was selected to command the First Army—earmarked for the cross-Channel invasion of Europe—instead of him. When Bradley paid a final courtesy call on Patton, on September 7, 1943, at his palace in Palermo, he found Patton "in a near-suicidal state. This great proud warrior, my former boss, had been brought to his knees." (And it's hard to escape the conclusion that Bradley loved every moment.)

In contrast to these people, General Mark Clark comes over in all three books as a sweet poppet, which is probably the reason that he is not nearly so famous today as the other three.

Of course, Patton and Montgomery did cordially loathe each other—Patton called Monty "that cocky little limey fart" and Monty thought Patton a "foul-mouthed lover of war"—and Charles Whiting seeks to place this dislike in its overall geopolitical context. By mid-1943, America was overtaking the United Kingdom in every aspect of the war effort, a fact that Winston Churchill acknowledged and which led him subtly to adapt his political posture accordingly. Yet Montgomery could simply not bring himself to face the new situation, and became progressively more anti-American as the preponderance of the United States became more evident.

The moment when Montgomery publicly cracked came on January 7, 1945, during the Battle of the Bulge, when (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force having lifted its near-three-week censorship restrictions) he gave an extensive press briefing to a select group of war correspondents at his headquarters at Zonhoven. It was a disgraceful performance by anyone's estimation—including his personal staff, who were shocked by his ineptitude or, some think, his malice.

Montgomery's presentation of the story of the Germans' great Ardennes offensive, and the way that it had been turned back, implied that his 21st Army Group had had to save the Americans: "General Eisenhower placed me in command of the whole northern front," boasted Monty in his most vainglorious manner. "I employed the whole available power of the British group of armies. You have this picture of British troops fighting on both sides of American forces, who had suffered a hard blow. This is a fine Allied picture." Although he spoke of the average GI being "jolly brave" in "an interesting little battle," he claimed he had entered the engagement "with a bang," and although he might not have quite meant it like that, he left the impression that he had effectively rescued the Americans from defeat. There were some generous references to the courage of the American fighting man, but none to the American generals other than Eisenhower.

As a result of the Zonhoven briefing, Bradley, saying that Montgomery was "all-out, right-down-to-the-toes mad," told Eisenhower that he could not serve under Montgomery, but would prefer to be transferred back to the United States. Patton immediately made the same declaration. Then Bradley started courting the press, rarely "venturing out of his [headquarters] without at least fifteen newspa-

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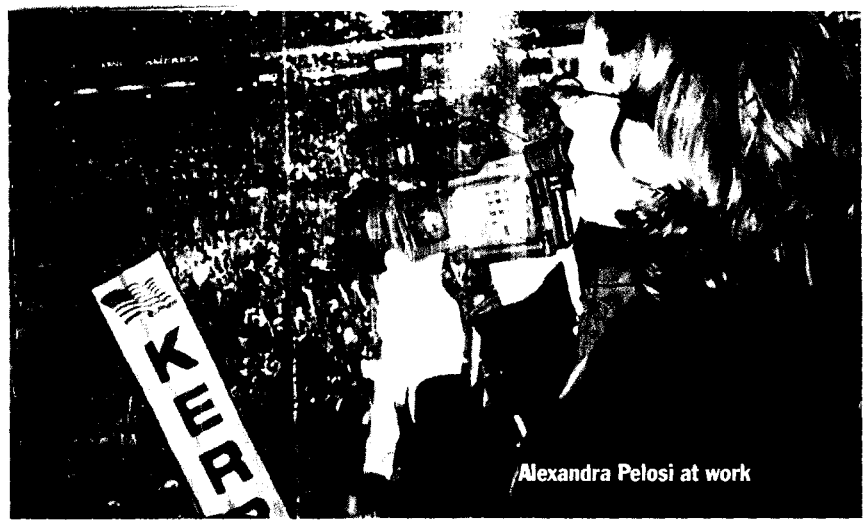
permen." Bradley and Patton subsequently leaked information to the American press that damaged Montgomery, and then proceeded, in the words of the American journalist Ralph Ingersoll, "to make and carry out plans without the assistance of the official channels, on a new basis openly discussed only among themselves. In order to do this they had to conceal their plans from the British and almost literally outwit Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters, half of which was British." Charles Whiting shows how Anglo-American generalship in the West from 1943 to 1945 was indeed a special relationship: specially dreadful.

Michael Reynolds's book, *Monty and Patton: Two Paths to Victory*, is an admirably evenhanded work that shows how both generals were excellent fighting men in their own very different ways, but also how their arrogance, personal unpleasantness, and giant egos were bound to produce clashes when they had only the western half of the European continent in which to operate together. A former British major-general who led NATO's Allied Command Europe Mobile Force, Reynolds has written three books on the Battle of the Bulge, and no one could be better qualified to cover this ground, which he does highly effectively.

By the end, the reader is certain that of the two, Patton was the nastier, madder man, and one understands why he was demoted so soon after the war—but not before he had suggested arming the Wehrmacht in order to force the Red Army "back into Russia" at a time when the Soviet Union had over five million men under arms. (Reynolds's book also has 16 pages of maps that are invaluable in understanding Patton's strategy.)

The true hero of all three of these books is not mentioned in the title or subtitle of any of them. How General Eisenhower held the ring between these competing, strutting martinets, using charm, good humor, but occasionally veiled threats too, is a fascinating study in diplomacy. Thank God they all—even Monty for much of the time—liked Ike. ♦



Alexandra Pelosi at work

Vote or, Like, Die

A post-teen's diary of the 2004 campaign.

BY JUDY BACHRACH

What Alexandra Pelosi, the daughter of the House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, is trying to get across in her vertiginous book on the 2004 presidential election is difficult to express. Difficult for her, I mean, and therefore impossible for anyone else. Outwardly, the object seems straightforward enough. The book is called *Sneaking into the Flying Circus*, and then subtitled *How the Media Turn Our Presidential Campaigns Into Freak Shows*.

Sneaking into the Flying Circus
How the Media Turn Our Presidential Campaigns Into Freak Shows
by Alexandra Pelosi
Free Press, 320 pp., $25

This is so simple and appealing a concept that the reader's first impulse is to cheer—for many reasons. For one thing, it is long past time to revisit this subject. More than 30 years have passed since the appearance of *The Boys on the Bus*, the perceptive work of Timothy Crouse, who wrote in an era when coverage of national elections was indeed the province of a small group of flabby, aging boys, none of whom had access to the Internet. Besides, 2004 was a fine year for memorable media moments, which deserve further scrutiny: Dan Rather, backed into a corner, turning into as ardent a stonewaller as his old enemy Richard Nixon, say. Or the Howard Dean scream, hyped out of malice (and out of context as well) by television, but emblematic nonetheless of the candidate's other frailties.

Certainly such national treasures could easily be mined by a TV producer with experience covering national campaigns (Pelosi made the documentary *Journeys with George* in 2000 and, four years later, *Diary of a Political Tourist* for HBO). After all, American elections are never exclusively about victory and almost never about merit. They very often come down to who among the many protagonists in the electoral drama bears the lesser degree of culpability. A wartime president silent about his military past, or a network that leaps into the void with fabrications? A candidate who relies on Katherine Harris, or one who depends on the dispiriting sartorial counsel of Naomi Wolf?

But Pelosi's book—and really it's not so much a book as a bound stack of instant messages, which could have been dispatched by any teenager in the country—contains just a few sentences

Judy Bachrach is a contributing editor at Vanity Fair.

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concerning the Rather disaster. And as for Dean's scream: Well, here the author relies on the most authoritative source at her disposal: "My Dutch boyfriend knew that the whole scene didn't look right . . ."

Nor is this the only appearance of the boyfriend. He makes his debut on page three on a conga line at a White House Christmas party, where he is quoted as saying, with perhaps a smaller degree of originality than one might wish for, "This looks like Rome before the fall."

As it happens, there isn't a love object, colleague, or tradesman among Pelosi's ever-expanding circle of acquaintances whose views are allowed to go unpublished. For example, we learn from Pixie the Fed Ex lady that "Republicans are in the sales business. They know how to sex it up and sell it. They know how to manipulate the images." One page later, Jesus the cable guy "who came to fix my DSL line" reinforces the substance of Pixie's reflections. Pelosi's cameraman—twice quoted but, unlike Jesus, never named—believes that "journalism is the intellectual form of asking for an autograph." (This is one of many conclusions arrived at that caused me to write a big red "HUH?" in the margin, and not simply because I question whether journalism is the intellectual form of anything.)

Later, Pelosi finds herself in a Manhattan restaurant, where "the guy at the table next to me" glances unlovingly at her copy of the *New York Times*, and complains about the general dullness of the Kerry campaign. In other words, all the voluble, bad-tempered, predictable, slow-witted seatmates ever encountered on planes, trains, and barstools have in this one volume been collected, their thoughts unabridged.

And to what possible end? one wonders. Why are we hearing from the whiney chorus when this is supposed to be a book about the villainy of the press? What, for that matter, *are* Pelosi's notions concerning the press? She seems to be awfully confused, given how she begins her book: "This leads us to a conflict that is as old as democracy itself. Ever since the press stopped trusting politicians, the politicians have been suspicious and paranoid of the press. There is a lot of bad blood running in both directions, and that tug of war is undermining our democracy."

Let's leave aside—but only for a moment!—the ineradicable image of a lot of bad blood running in both directions (Dr. Harvey, please report to surgery). Pelosi clearly has given but limited thought to the premise of her book. After all, if something is as "old as democracy itself," then it can't very well be, 230 years later, the undermining of the republic. And if this conflict is truly embedded—as those of us who followed the career of John Peter Zenger might perhaps conclude—then the press hasn't "stopped trusting politicians," as it considered them untrustworthy from the start. And finally (and it does make one wonder how many books the author actually read before she began writing), in what possible way is all this bi-directional blood "undermining our democracy"? Pelosi gives no examples, possibly for good reason. Show me a country where politicians are fond of reporters, and I'll show you the Soviet Union.

Like the author's ideas, her writing seems a slapdash effort, hastily contrived. Pelosi metaphors (and there are chapters and chapters stuffed with these) are trotted around and shuffled about, without her worrying overmuch about which ones actually get along.

"Because the senator doesn't trust the pack of unwashed snarling dogs at his heel, he acts like a scripted cardboard cutout," she writes of John Kerry's coolness toward the media. Or even better: "Covering this campaign, I have met some of the best journalists in the business. I have also met a lot of total buzzards. . . . Like the good America and the bad America (of which George Bush spoke in defense of the crimes committed at Abu Ghraib prison), there are always going to be a few rotten apples that spoil the lot."

Apples. Buzzards. Abu Ghraib. Unwashed dogs. And then, out of nowhere, at the very end of the book: "What would the Founding Fathers have thought about the live coverage of Jenna Bush applying lipstick?"

An excellent question, and one, oddly enough, that invariably comes to mind on checkout lines, in proximity to the *Star*. What *would* Thomas Jefferson have made of televised lipstick applications? Perhaps that the total buzzards were at last learning something useful. ♦

Latin Prescription

Is there a cure for South America's sickness?

BY WILLIAM RATLIFF

This is the most uncompromising, insightful history of Latin America now available. Don't expect a routine discussion of presidents, *caudillos*, constitutions, and guerrilla wars, as important as those are in their way. Alvaro Vargas Llosa focuses on more basic and underlying matters.

He explains why Latin America is the most unequal region on earth, and why it will remain that way, muddling along on the backs of the majority, unless fundamental reforms are carried out. The author emphasizes the impact of both "cultural" factors ("values that determine human conduct") and "institutional" factors ("the rules by which individuals relate to each other"). These have derailed several efforts at major

William Ratliff is a fellow at the Hoover Institution and the author, most recently, of China's "Lessons" for Cuba's Transition.

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reforms undertaken since most of the countries gained their independence two centuries ago, most recently in the 1990s. There may be another chance in a decade or so, he suggests, and the key to making the reforms work next time will be understanding why they have failed in the past.

This book explains why they failed, and offers a program for success the next time around. The author is a journalist and analyst who, like his father the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, has engaged in politics in his native Peru. He coauthored the equally hard-hitting *Guide to the Perfect Latin American Idiot*, a book that critiques Latin Americans who refuse to accept responsibility, but always seek scapegoats, for the region's conditions.

This book emphasizes five interrelated "principles of oppression" that have determined the lives of the region's people, from precolonial times to the present. They are: corporatism, state mercantilism, privilege, bottom-up wealth redistribution, and political law. In brief, state power was justified by "political law" and maintained by means of ideas and institutions that treated people as groups rather than individuals, emphasized extracting rather than producing wealth, and channeled that extracted wealth from the mass of workers who labored in the mines, fields, or factories to the ruling elites.

In his analysis of the past thousand years of Latin American history, Vargas Llosa shows that the principles of oppression always adapted to new conditions and challenges, and thus not only survived but, in altered forms, thrived. This prevented the flourishing of individual freedom and economies and representative governments that might benefit the vast majority of the people. Mexico's Nobel Laureate, Octavio Paz, put Latin America's problem this way: "Though Spanish-American civilization is to be admired on many counts, it reminds us of a construction of great solidity—built to last, not to change. In the long run, that construction became a confine, a prison."

Clearly, Vargas Llosa is not the first to notice the remarkable adaptability of the wardens of this "prison." Howard Wiarda also did so recently in *The Soul of Latin America*. But better than anyone before him, Vargas Llosa shows how this durability has thwarted efforts to fundamentally change things. Ironically, while one usually and understandably associates Latin America with instability—the presidential coups, revolutions, guerrilla wars, raging inflation, economic collapses, corruption (the litany of problems that make up Latin American news and history)—the overriding characteristic of the region, and its bane, has been its underlying super-stability. Nothing has really challenged the five forms of oppression. The opportunity for reform arises, Vargas Llosa argues, when those who live directly and those who live indirectly off the state's exploitation of the people come into conflict with each other. This happened in the 1990s, a period of hope and, ultimately, failure that is examined here in considerable detail. Many things did change then, he says, some for the better, including the curbing of inflation. But in the end most "reforms" turned out to be just a shuffling of elite winners and losers, generally at the expense of the majority. Even much-touted privatization efforts, which transferred assets without guaranteeing property rights to all citizens, ended up creating new elites and new government-owned enterprises, while real free-marketers took the blame for all failures.

Alvaro Vargas Llosa

Liberty for Latin America
How to Undo Five Hundred Years of State Oppression
by Alvaro Vargas Llosa
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 288 pp., $25

Last year, the *Economist* had a special report on Argentina entitled "Becoming a serious country," and one of the comments on the streets in Quito, Ecuador, during the presidential upheaval of mid-April was the need to become "serious." But the inclination to reject real seriousness persists. Consider, for example, the reaction of Mexico's National Autonomous University (UNAM) to the *Times* of London's recent survey of the world's top 200 universities. It was the only university in Latin America to make the list, and came in at number 195. UNAM promptly sent out a press release bragging that UNAM stood at the forefront of Latin American universities! The vanguard of the tail, as it were, so often the tragic story in Latin America.

One chapter is devoted to "friendly fire from the United States." While Vargas Llosa states unequivocally that Latin Americans themselves are primarily responsible for their conditions in the past and today, he argues that the United States, whether by meaning well or just looking out for its own interests, has seldom played a constructive role in the region. Relations have ranged from military interventions and Cold War compromises to the failed war on drugs. And even when Washington tries to support what it really thinks will bring constructive change, such as the reforms of the 1990s, it does so with such naiveté that it fails to promote the development of a prosperous region that could be a stable and productive trade and security partner.

No man of principle and conscience who so rejects the current state of affairs in the region could neglect to propose a way out. Vargas Llosa picks up on a persistent but secondary "indi-

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vidualist" tradition in the region, and advocates the liberation of every individual from the oppression that has limited most Latin Americans' access to secure property rights and equal opportunities for education, health care, and wealth creation. He proposes a "gentle landing" for those who have become dependent on the current state of affairs. This sweeping proposal is more institutional than cultural, he says, because postponing removal of the direct causes of oppression until more positive cultural values are accepted "will condemn us to impotence."

The problem, whatever questions one may have with individual ideas, is that the changes Llosa advocates fly in the face of the very cultural and institutional forces that he details so well, and that have always co-opted earlier challenges and turned them into little more than a reshuffling of power. Why will it be any different next time?

The difference will have to be the availability and broader acceptance of analyses like this one, and demands for real change. But how to get this perspective more widely accepted? This book will help, if it is taken seriously. Equally improbable things have happened: the recent United Nations-sponsored Arab human development reports, for example. Perhaps the United Nations could commission Vargas Llosa to head a similar study of Latin America, which would draw universal attention to the realities and what should be done.

Beginning this summer, he will be in charge of a new center at the Independent Institute in Oakland, California (funded by the Templeton Foundation and others), that will promote free markets in underdeveloped countries, especially in Latin America. But if programs like this one, and Vargas Llosa's message, do not get through, we may well have to continue relying on the assessment by northern South America's "liberator," Simon Bolivar. Almost two centuries ago he concluded that Latin America is "ungovernable," and that those who try to make real change there are "plowing the sea." ♦

Not So Long Ago

The New York of Mayor Beame, Son of Sam, and Billy Martin. BY DANIEL SULLIVAN

New York City in the '70s. The phrase conjures images of some of the city's seediest days, the New York of *Taxi Driver* and *Dog Day Afternoon*, and recalls the decadence of Studio 54 and the smoldering decay of the Bronx. The '70s are usually seen as a decade of fundamental transition, and how they are interpreted tends to carry high stakes. Depending on what someone thinks of politics and culture in New York today, the Me Decade can appear as a rougher, but more genuine, time than our own over-commercialized day. They were a nightmarish skirt on the edge of the social abyss, from which we have only just recovered. Or a pioneering age that completed the social revolution that the 1960s began. Or the final failure of the utopian promise of '60s radicalism.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Bronx is Burning
1977, Baseball, Politics, and the Battle for the Soul of a City
by Jonathan Mahler
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 354 pp., $16

In his first book, *New York Times Magazine* writer Jonathan Mahler combines all of these characterizations without over-indulging any of them. Though he follows in detail the course of only one year of the 1970s, his book (as his unnecessarily long title suggests) involves the difficult changes that New York, and American society in general, underwent during the entire decade.

He avoids clichés, but Mahler views 1970s New York with some nostalgia. *The Bronx is Burning* reads like an ode to the New York Mahler first encountered as an eight-year-old Californian Yankee fan, and he writes the book as a sort of journalistic diary. His writing is personal as well as informative, and it has a keen sense of drama.

Mahler focuses on two major stories: the 1977 Democratic mayoral primary (known as the election in those days) and the 1977 Yankee season. The former pitted incumbent Abraham Beame, the heir of an expiring political old guard, against the radical activist Bella Abzug, and two new faces ended up dominating the race: Mario Cuomo and Edward Koch. The Yankee season pitted embattled manager Billy Martin against superstar free agent Reggie Jackson, Boss George Steinbrenner, and just about everyone else. Throughout these two parallel tales Mahler intersperses supporting characters, shorter events, and limited disasters such as Rupert Murdoch and his acquisition of the *New York Post*, the Son of Sam murders, the summer blackout and ensuing riots, the gentrification of Soho, and the deterioration of Times Square.

All of which makes 1970s New York appear both terribly exciting and spectacularly horrifying. Mahler's breezy style allows the reader to sympathize with a variety of characters, including the uncharismatic but hard-working Mayor Beame, the glamorous but insecure Jackson, and the unglamorous and insecure Billy Martin. As Mahler adroitly weaves together these figures and their stories, his essential point becomes clear: The "battle for the soul of a city" represents the fitful death of one New York, and the concomitant birth of another.

"I gradually came to regard '77 as a transformative moment for the city," he writes, "a time of decay but of reha-

Daniel Sullivan is a writer in New Jersey.

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bilitation as well. New York was straddling eras."

The old era was that of the New York that Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia had meant to build, with free health care and university education for all, and subsidized city housing, run by an efficient and enlightened municipal machine. That New York was fading. Teetering on the edge of drop-dead bankruptcy, it gave way to a glitzier city. This rising New York would be the city of volatile superstars like Jackson bankrolled by arrogant businessmen like Steinbrenner. Mahler's analysis of the great shift that seized the city in the '70s is not terribly original, of course. But Mahler chose 1977 as his emblematic year in order to use its twin struggles to illustrate his version of a fairly common story: The decrepitude and subsequent rejuvenation of many of America's great 20th century cities.

In a year that exhausted the city, the Yankees, a far cry from today's pretty-in-pinstripes team, gave New York the World Series victory it desperately needed. Mahler highlights the symbolism of that victory, which saw the rotting Bronx Bombers defeat the exiled Brooklyn Dodgers. That the Yankees defeated Los Angeles's Dodgers, who were a significant part of the postwar cultural shift in America to the West Coast, seemed especially gratifying.

And the story, as Mahler tells it, is thoroughly enjoyable. But it is also strangely forgettable. In a way, Mahler does too much and not enough. The spectacle of 1977 is engaging, and he presents it well. But by burdening the show with his ideas about this "transformative" moment in New York's history, he invests many of the events (especially the Yankee World Series) with too much metaphorical meaning.

At the same time, if he wanted to make an argument about the tumult of the decade, he failed to provide much more than a vague outline. Indeed, the '70s are often considered transformative; but Mahler makes the turning point of the revolution the mayoral election and Reggie Jackson's Series-winning three home-run performance. Beyond that, the marvelous spectacle that he conjures, though great fun, does not provide his ideas much depth.

This shortcoming is not really Mahler's fault, however. It reflects an inadequacy of the genre—the journalistic history. Like a series of pieces in the *Times* magazine, journalistic history *can* be absorbing, but it only hints at more sophisticated explanations of the events it describes. Such is the nature of journalism, and perhaps it's best to let the subject occupy the stage. Saul Bellow, in a brief rumination written in 1970, discussed the fascination that New York held for Americans: "New York itself is the theater of the nation, showing strange things. Outsiders—the rest of the country—do not tire of watching." The charm of *The Bronx is Burning* rests precisely with its polymorphous spectacle, which we never tire of watching. ♦

Three Iraqi Films

Saddam's fall liberated moviemakers, too.

BY CYNTHIA GRENIER

Remember this name: Bahman Ghobadi. He is a Kurdish director/writer living in Iran. His third and latest film, *Turtles Can Fly*, is festooned, and justly so, with tributes and honors from international film festivals, as well as having been nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at this year's Academy Awards. This past March the Freer Gallery in Washington presented three most impressive films intimately touching on life in Iraq today. Two are the work of Iraqi directors; the third is Ghobadi's *Turtles Can Fly*. This film is, in short, extraordinary. It merits no other appellation than that of masterpiece, a term I am very reluctant to attach to any film made in recent years anywhere in the world.

The action takes place on the Kurdish/Iraqi border with Turkey, just a rifle shot from a Turkish guard tower, in a refugee camp set by a tiny Kurdish village. The time is one week before the American invasion. But before we see the camp, before even the titles, we see a young girl on the verge of womanhood, walking determinedly to the edge of an outcrop of rocks. Below is a vertiginous drop to a river many, many feet away. The girl pauses, carefully steps out of her light blue scuffs, and walks off into space. Blackout. The film begins.

In the camp, the village elders are calling for "Satellite"—a lanky, nerdy youth with oversized glasses, sundry worn American gear, and backward baseball cap—to bring them a dish so they can get television to learn if war is coming. Satellite knows how to install these dishes. The land around the mountainous border region is strewn with mines and rockets from the Iraq-Iran war. Under Satellite's guidance, the camp's small children are clearing the fields so the villagers can once again farm their land. The performance of the children is painfully, appallingly convincing. It does not seem like any performance you've seen before on a screen. At the same time, the kids are as spontaneous, lively, and funny as kindergarten-age youngsters anywhere in the world.

If you are in any doubt about the kind of life these children live and face, consider the youth, Hirsh Feyssal, whose role, as brother to the girl who commits suicide at the beginning, is a key figure in the film. Hirsh is armless; two small ragged stumps

Cynthia Grenier writes the Mag Trade *column for the* Washington Times.

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From Turtles Can Fly

protrude from the sleeves of his black T-shirt. Sit unmoved, if you can, as he bends over a small land mine, one of its nails gripped between his teeth, endeavoring to work it free. He is handsome, his face imprinted with a kind of dignity and grave nobility far beyond his years.

The film is surprisingly, genuinely funny, making an audience burst into roars of laughter. When a television set is finally mounted for the elders and adjusted—with the old men crying out not to turn it to any of the channels forbidden by Saddam, no Western music or women—the very first images that appear, from MTV, are truly shocking out of context. Then CNN and President Bush appear. The elders demand, "What says this Bush?" Satellite's English is limited to "one, two" and "go," but quick-wittedly he offers, "The President says it will rain tomorrow." (An easy enough supposition as it's the heavy rain season.)

Mingled throughout are marks of American culture and mores. The kids all proudly wear some form of American garb and shout out the few words they know of English. The first American soldiers are looked upon with immense excitement. But is their arrival really a source of unmitigated joy? You have to see this remarkable film for yourself, and draw your own conclusions. (No, the film is not any simple-minded anti-American screed. Far from it.)

The second film is *Zaman: The Man from the Reeds*, directed by Amer Alwan, who left Iraq at 23 in 1983 to study cinema in Paris, and returned only in January 2003 to make this film. It was shot in digital video, the export of film negative to Iraq being forbidden by the Saddam regime. That same regime also confiscated five videos that remain forever missing.

The story line could not be more simple. Zaman, a man in his sixties, living with his wife in the marshy region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, sets out on a quest for medication for her, medicines that, in the end, can only be found in Baghdad. There are vague suggestions that the wife's illness may have come from the toxic material dispersed earlier by Saddam against his own people.

Zaman rows his small boat up the Tigris, passing a wedding party celebrating on brightly decked boats. The first small towns he comes to have none of the medications he seeks. He must go to Baghdad. But the capital, with its traffic, noise, and crowded streets, is as strange a world to Zaman as it is to Western audiences. At a bus stop we see a heavy driver shouting out a wonderful spiel for men to board his bus to go to see some famous Iraqi fighter. His arms swoop back and forth, miming a prizefight. A few vivid moments, and Zaman trudges on to yet another pharmacy. A young attendant at a Catholic hospital, indignant at the corrupt ways of her superior, gives the medication to Zaman, refusing any payment. Ironically, Zaman begs her to thank her superior for his great kindness.

Throughout the film, Iraqi life is shown in all the shadings and nuances of life almost anywhere in the world. Alwan's own politics come in only in the voiceover, praising French President Jacques Chirac's Iraq policy and criticizing George W. Bush; but if you blink and don't understand Arabic, you could easily miss both. The look of the lush green marshlands, with their dwellings made of woven reeds by the water's edge, is very handsome. Apparently, the marshlands are slowly reverting to their natural state.

The third film, *About Baghdad*, is a documentary made by a collective, InCounter Productions, and follows an exiled Iraqi writer and poet, Sinan Antoon, on a trip he made to Baghdad in July 2003 as he interviews an assortment of Iraqis speaking their minds on the Americans, and on their life under Saddam. One quite astounding sequence shows the monument to the Martyrs (those who fell in the Iraq-Iran war) which apparently has never been seen on American television. Two immense pale blue forms rise out of a desert, rather like two parts of a gigantic eggshell. The open space between the two halves is explained as being where the soul emerges from the body on one side before coming to rest on the other in Heaven.

What remains in your mind from these three films, which are scheduled to play throughout the country through the end of next month, is their reflection of the character of the Iraqi people. The most encouraging, perhaps, are the children of *Turtles Can Fly*. These youngsters, for the most part all under ten, are singularly resilient, tough, independent, and enterprising. They are not actors. With a good turn from history, they are the kind of children who, in growing to adulthood, may build a strong society and country prepared to take its place in the world. These kids give you hope, and you only trust they will be able to grow up. ♦

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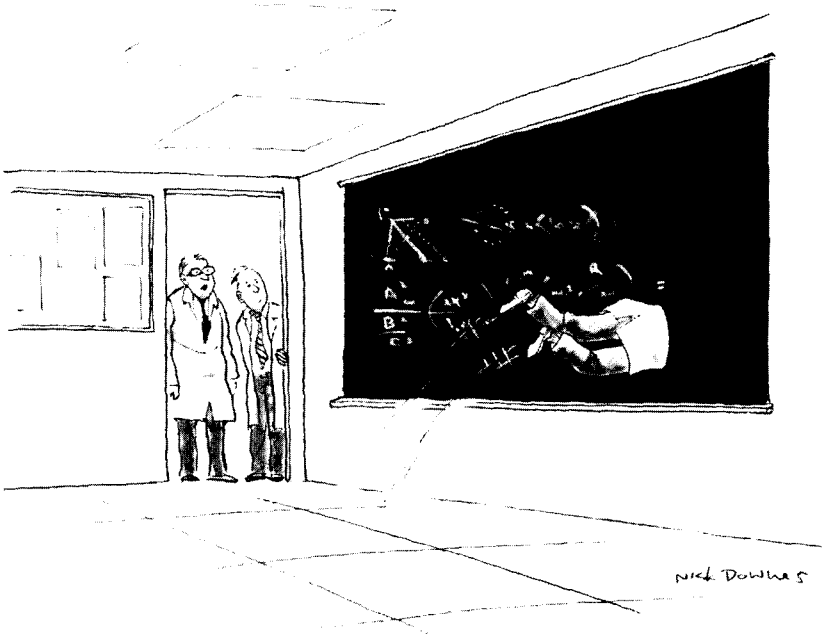

"It looks like Quigley's onto something."

Books in Brief

***Against the Flow: Reflections of an Individualist* by Samuel Brittan (Atlantic Books, 385 pp., £25)** Literate writing on political economy is considered by many a contradiction of terms, but longtime readers of the *Financial Times* know better. For the past three decades the columnist Samuel Brittan has served up the finer points of macroeconomic analysis to a predominantly British audience in prose that is clear, tightly reasoned, and rarely burdened by technical jargon.

The British publisher Atlantic Books has released a compilation of Sir Samuel's essays, speeches, testimony to public bodies, and other musings over the past several years. Whether arguing the advantages of floating exchange rates, weighing the pros and cons of accepting a common European currency, or urging the indexation of the age of retirement, Brittan illuminates key current issues from the perspective of one who is unapologetic about his belief in the virtues of market-oriented capitalism.

The book's title, *Against the Flow*, reflects a philosophical outlook fundamentally at odds with prevailing elite opinion. For example, in reviewing a book advocating single-mindedly for an equality of material conditions, he points out that "equality serves as an ersatz religion for much of the academic left in Great Britain and the U.S. Ivy League." And in one of the volume's most thoughtful pieces, a paper entitled "In Defense of Individualism," Brittan, much of whose family perished in the Holocaust, describes "the danger of collectivism [as] that of attributing a superior value to collective entities over and above those who compose it," an error, he points out, that "reached its apotheosis in the state worship of the Nazi and communist regimes."

Regardless of his topic, Brittan nearly always manages to keep focused on the big picture, and takes both ideas and their consequences seriously. The book's best section profiles leading economic thinkers of the 20th century, including Keynes, Hayek, and Friedman. (There are also separate profiles of Norman Angell, Bertrand Russell, and Ayn Rand.) Also included is a speech Brittan delivered in 2000 offering some basic economic principles that "might be of value to people with no particular interest in mastering techniques or passing exams in the subject," adding that while intuition and common sense are more valuable to policymakers than formal models, most of their decisions have to be made by fallible human beings "without there being a sage like Keynes or Friedman on the spot."

Brittan brings a clear-headed analysis to topics like globalization—calling for more rather than less of it in the form of the removal of restrictions on labor mobility—and corruption, whose upsurge in the West he attributes to the increased interrelationship between the public and private sectors.

His views on foreign policy place Brittan somewhat uncomfortably in the realist camp, albeit one concerned about human rights violations and repelled by appeasement. In a column written just two weeks after the 9/11 attacks entitled "The Danger of Too Much Understanding," he notes with disgust that "it has not taken long for the appeasers to come out of the woodwork."

Although Brittan's writing is geared primarily to a European audience, American publishers interested in elevating our own debates on many public issues might consider—if they haven't already—making this volume available here.

—David Lowe

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Parody

Lawrence H. Summers, the embattled president of Harvard University, announced yesterday that the university would spend at least $50 million over the next decade to recruit, support, and promote women and underrepresented members of minority groups on its faculty. Dr. Summers said the money would be spent on a range of initiatives. **—News item**

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and not necessarily in disagreement with you. Nevertheless, as some of the Overseers put it, you really can't put a price tag on the value of the Summers presidency, and so Larry and a few senior faculty have sketched some preliminary ideas to get the initiative off the drawing board.

- The Lawrence H. Summers Chair in Race, Gender, and Biochemistry. ($6.5 million)

- The Harvard "Summers" School: A month-long learning camp for rising high school seniors (female) with an interest in biology, chemistry, or physics. "Uncle Larry" pledges to devote one afternoon session to campers considering careers in the "dismal science." ($350,000)

- Design and installation of plaque or stained-glass window in Memorial Hall to commemorate female science students at Harvard/Radcliffe killed in chemical explosions or suffocated in Skinner boxes. ($2.5 million)

- Establishment of five (5) Lawrence H. Summers Mentoring Fellowships to supplement income for female tenured faculty assigned to first-year females in the previously-male-dominated (PMD) Medical School. ($875,000)

- Endowment of women-only auxiliary to Society of Fellows to be called Society of Womyn, with particular emphasis on research in PMD scientific disciplines. ($12 million)

- The Godkin Lecture will henceforth be referred to in all university announcements and publications as the Goddesskin Lecture, and will examine the role of women in science, women scientists, scientific research into women, and the science of women's research. ($2.8 million)

- The Lawrence H. Summers Festival of Women's Scientific Theatre will consist of an annual presentation of three (3) plays or musical productions on themes of women's achievement in science. For the 2005-06 season these will include *The Vagina Monologues* starring Sharon Stone as Madame Curie, Kate Winslet as Dorothy Hodgkin, and Jennifer Aniston as Maria Goeppert-Mayer; and two one-woman shows, Jill Hennessy in *I'm Not a Pathologist but I Play One on TV* and Jane Seymour as *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman.* ($3.5 million)

- "Physics is Phun!" ongoing program for female majors in physics, mathematics, and astronomy to explore physical/scientific dimensions of clothes design, cosmetics research, and interpersonal relationships. ($250,000)

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In the new issue of *Policy Review*

Checks, Balances, and Wartime Detainees

The Supreme Court mediates as Congress abdicates

In the end, the enemy combatant cases—at least so far—stand as a kind of case study of the consequence of abandoning to the adversarial litigation system a sensitive policy debate in which powerful and legitimate constitutional concerns animate both sides. By nearly universal agreement, these cases were submitted to common-law decision making in the face of almost-as-universal agreement that the extant body of law did not fully address the novel conditions of the war on terrorism. As a result, . . . the courts were left to split the difference between polar arguments to which few Americans would actually sign on and which should not have defined the terms of the discussion. It needn't have been this way. But until Congress assumes responsibility for crafting a system to handle enemy combatants, the regime necessarily will remain a crude, judge-made hybrid.

—Benjamin Wittes

Security beyond Borders

An unheralded success in transatlantic relations

Neither U.S. nor EU political leaders have engaged the attention of their political elites with their counter-terrorist agenda. Officials on both sides of the Atlantic, well aware of the overall turbulence of the transatlantic relationship, have been at pains to keep foreign policy and counter-terrorist issues separate and to address problems within government channels rather than negotiating via the media. But while this approach undoubtedly has brought substantial benefits, it does have the downside of failing to educate either the public or the political elites about the true state of affairs.

—Leslie S. Lebl

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MARIJUANA AND YOUR TEEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Depression. Suicidal Thoughts. Schizophrenia.

If you have outdated perceptions about marijuana, you might be putting your teen at risk. New research is giving us better insight into the serious consequences of teen marijuana use, especially how it impacts mental health.

Did you know that young people who use marijuana weekly have double the risk of depression later in life?[1] And that teens aged 12 to 17 who smoke marijuana weekly are three times more likely than non-users to have suicidal thoughts?[2]

And if that's not bad enough, marijuana use in some teens has been linked to increased risk for schizophrenia in later years.[3]

Today's teens are smoking a more potent drug[4] and starting use at increasingly younger ages during crucial brain development years.[5] Still think marijuana's no big deal?

Remember, you are the most important influence in your teen's life when it comes to drugs,[6] so tell your teen the facts about marijuana. Teens who learn about the risks from their parents are less likely to smoke marijuana or use other drugs than teens who don't.

Let your teens know you don't want them using marijuana. Their mental health may depend on it.

Signed,

- *American Psychiatric Association*
- *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*
- *American Society of Addiction Medicine*
- *Asian Community Mental Health Services*
- *Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse*
- *Institute for Behavior and Health, Inc.*
- *National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association*
- *National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers*
- *National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare*
- *National Latino Behavioral Health Association*
- *National Medical Association*
- *Office of National Drug Control Policy*
- *Partnership for a Drug-Free America*

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[1]Patton, GC et al. Cannabis use and mental health in young people: cohort study. *British Medical Journal*, 325: 1195–1198, 2002. [2]Greenblatt, J. Adolescent self-reported behaviors and their association with marijuana use, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 1998. [3]Arseneault, L et al. Cannabis use in adolescence and risk for adult psychosis: longitudinal prospective study. *British Medical Journal*, 325: 1212–1213, 2002; Veen, N et al. Cannabis use and age at onset of schizophrenia. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 161: 501–506, 2004. [4]*Marijuana Potency Monitoring Project. Report No. 83*, University of Mississippi, 2003. [5]SAMHSA. Trends in Initiation of Substance Use, 2003. [6]SAMHSA. Parental Disapproval of Youths' Substance Abuse, 2002.

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